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HISTORY OF ENGLAND

by Sharon Turner
DURING

THE MIDDLE AGES.

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THE
HISTORY
OF
ENGLAND
DURING
THE MIDDLE AGES.

VOL. V.

CONTAINING
THE HISTORY OF RELIGION, — THE PROGRESS TO ITS
REFORMATION — THE HISTORY OF THE ENGLISH POETRY,
LANGUAGE, AND PROSE COMPOSITION, TO THE END OF
THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY.

THIRD EDITION.

BY
SHARON TURNER, F.S.A. R.A.S.L.

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TABLE
OF
CONTENTS.

VOLUME V.

BOOK VII.

HISTORY OF RELIGION IN ENGLAND.

CHAP. I.

ORIGIN AND NATURE OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL SYSTEM
ESTABLISHED IN ENGLAND.

	page
Introductory remarks - - - - -	1
The corruption of Christianity inevitable - - -	4
It had to mix with existing habits and prejudices - -	5
Its history, therefore, a scene of errors and virtues - -	6
Its improvement necessarily gradual - - -	7
Intense feeling not alone a sufficient guide - - -	8
Hence the Christianity of our ancestors a motley system -	11
Paganism the great cause of its defects - - -	13
Long continuance of Paganism - - - - -	14
Controversies on the Trinity and Incarnation, caused by it	16
Competition of Polytheism - - - - -	17
The nature of the Deity, the great subject of discussion -	20

	page
The popular system of Christian worship much influenced by the Pagan rites - - - - -	24
The deterioration of Christianity - - - - -	27
Arrested by the Gothic irruptions - - - - -	28
Consequences of these to Christianity - - - - -	ib.
The elevation of the Pope - - - - -	29
His popularity and temporary usefulness - - - - -	30
His unavoidable imperfections - - - - -	34
Christianity addressed to the human sympathies - - - - -	36
Papal system directed to interest them - - - - -	38
It debases Christianity by its anxiety for effect - - - - -	40
Its worldly policy - - - - -	41
Use of the cross and crucifix - - - - -	43
The Madonna and Infant - - - - -	45
Impassioned and familiar devotion - - - - -	49
Relics - - - - -	50
Saints - - - - -	51
Legends - - - - -	52
Images - - - - -	54
Purgatory - - - - -	55
Confession and absolution - - - - -	61
Transubstantiation - - - - -	65
Interdict - - - - -	67
The Catholic ceremonies symbolical - - - - -	68
Purer tuition intermixed - - - - -	72
Predestination taught - - - - -	76
Credulity of the middle ages not peculiar - - - - -	77
ANALYSIS of Peter Lombard's sentences - - - - -	79

CHAP. II.

ON THE ANGLO-NORMAN MONASTERIES; ON THE FRANCISCAN
AND DOMINICAN PERSECUTIONS, AND BELIEF IN THE
MIRACLES OF THE SAINTS.

	page
Anglo-Saxon Monasteries - - - - -	84
Others built or revived in England by Lanfranc - - - - -	85
Their moral utility - - - - -	86
Their mechanical devotion - - - - -	87
Its effects on the dark ages - - - - -	90

CONTENTS.

vii

	page
The public benefit of the monks - - - -	92
Use to the unprovided class of society - - - -	93
Napoleon Bonaparte's young remarks on this class - - - -	98
The Dominican Order - - - - -	99
St. Dominic - - - - -	100
Establishment of the Inquisition - - - -	103
The Franciscan Order - - - - -	105
St. Francis - - - - -	ib.
Persecuting spirit of the Romish church - - - -	106
Catholic miracles - - - - -	108
Power of self-suspension to be learnt - - - -	110
The profane festivals and customs continued under Chris- tianity - - - - -	111
The vicious Christmas mummeries - - - -	112
The Feast of Fools - - - - -	ib.
Imitation of the Pagan purifications - - - -	113
Pagan feasts on the tombs - - - - -	ib.
The Feast of Asses - - - - -	ib.

CHAP. III.

HISTORY OF THE PRINCIPAL ATTACKS ON PAPAL CHRIS- TIANITY, FROM THE EIGHTH CENTURY TO THE FOUR- TEENTH.

A. D.	page
Papal system an obstruction to human improve- ment - - - - -	115
Causes in action to overthrow it - - - -	ib.
Changes in opinion produced by heresies - - - -	116
Influence of Mohamedanism on Christianity - - - -	118
Claude attacks the images at Turin - - - -	122
653. Paulicians in Armenia - - - - -	123
They are persecuted by the Greeks - - - -	124
And protected by the Saracens - - - - -	125
Paulicians emigrate to Europe - - - - -	126
1150. The Albigenses, Waldenses, Cathari, &c. - - - -	127
Their successful missionary spirit - - - -	128
Their internal government - - - - -	129
Their good and evil opinions - - - - -	130
Religious opinions of the Vaudois in the year 1100 - - - -	131

A. D.		page
	ANALYSIS of La Nobla Leyczon, written 1100 -	131
	The Vaudois persecuted by the Pope - - -	135
	Their dispersion scatters their opinions through Europe - - - - -	136
	Coincidences that began the reformation in Armenia - - - - -	137
	The vernacular Scriptures the leading cause -	139
	Progress of disbelief, from the twelfth century -	140
	Principles of infidelity - - - - -	141
	Infidelity a consequence of superstition - -	142
	A philosophical book of infidelity in the thirteenth century - - - - -	143
	Anti-religious opinions mentioned by Alanus -	ib.
	Critical state of the church in the thirteenth century	145

CHAP. IV.

PROGRESS OF ENGLAND TO THE REFORMATION OF PAPAL
CHRISTIANITY BEGUN BY WICLIFFE.

A.D.		page
	Conduct of the English sovereigns towards the Pope	146
	Effect of the papal schisms - - - -	147
	Resistance of the English clergy to the Pope -	148
	Bishop Greathead's attack on the Pope -	ib.
	Measures of the English sovereigns to lessen the ecclesiastical power - - - - -	150
1343.	The House of Commons also interferes -	154
	English clergy oppose the mendicant friars -	155
	And are attacked by them - - - -	156
	The people deride them - - - - -	157
	Effect of the luxuries and vices of the clergy -	158
	The Pope condemns them - - - - -	161
	Regulations in England against them - -	ib.
	Causes of this degeneracy - - - - -	162
	Chaucer's Pardoner - - - - -	164
	Troubadours opposition to the Pope - -	165
1384.	Mendicant friars accused of heresies - -	166
	- - - - - frequently arrested - - -	167
	Wicliffe's attack on the friars - - - -	ib.
	Landed property of the clergy - - - -	169
1380.	ANALYSIS of St. Edmund's Speculum Ecclesiæ	170

CONTENTS.

ix

CHAP. V.

HISTORY OF THE WRITINGS AND OPINIONS OF JOHN WICLIFFE.

A.D.		page
	Increasing deterioration of society - - -	174
	All religious systems not equally beneficial - -	175
	The mind of the votary will be influenced by his mode of worship - - - - -	ib.
	The public disposed to favor a reformation - -	177
1215.	Pope Innocent III. perceived it - - - -	178
	Distinction taken between the faith and manners of the clergy - - - - -	179
	Activity of John Ball, a reforming priest - -	180
1324.	Birth of WICLIFFE - - - - -	181
	His TRIALOGUS - - - - -	ib.
	Extracts from it - - - - -	181
	Wicliffe's new doctrines - - - - -	179
	His belief of his personal danger - - - -	185
	ANALYSIS of Wicliffe's Trialogus - - - -	ib.
1377.	The Pope attacks him - - - - -	194
	The Scriptures his great instruments - - -	195
	His Postils on the Gospels - - - - -	196
	D ^r W. Wyddford his chief opponent - - -	197
1384.	Wicliffe's death - - - - -	198
	Persecution of his followers - - - - -	199
1396.	Oath of conformity extorted by the clergy - -	ib.
	Wicliffe's books carried to Bohemia - - -	200
	They excite JOHN HUSS to become a reformer -	ib.
	His doctrines - - - - -	202
	Writings of Huss impress Martin Luther's mind -	ib.
	Luther's literary talents and taste in the fine arts -	ib.

BOOK VIII.

HISTORY OF ENGLISH POETRY, FROM THE TWELFTH
CENTURY TO THE MIDDLE OF THE FIFTEENTH.

CHAP. I.

THE ENGLISH POETS WHO PRECEDED GOWER.

A.D.		page
	Language improved by poetry - - - -	204
	The poetry of feeling - - - -	205
	- - - - of fancy - - - -	206
	- - - - of the cultivated mind - - - -	207
	The first poetry of a nation, promiscuous - -	208
	Parts of it are always becoming obsolete - -	210
	Its progressive improvement - - - -	211
	Poetry the great instructor of mankind - -	ib.
	Our oldest poets beneficial teachers of their coun- trymen - - - -	212
	Old English poetry taken from the Anglo-Norman,	213
1200.	LAYAMON's Metrical History - - - -	214
	- - - - Arthur's Dream - - - -	ib.
1264.	ROBERT OF GLOUCESTER - - - -	216
	The OWL and the NIGHTINGALE - - - -	217
	BRUNNE's poems - - - -	218
	- - - - Manuel des Peches - - - -	219
	- - - - Tale of a Lord's Wife - - - -	220
	- - - - Tale of a Miner - - - -	221
	- - - - Tale of an Angry Woman - - - -	222
	- - - - Tale of a Dragon - - - -	223
	- - - - Praise of Women - - - -	224
	- - - - Tale of a Priest and a Saracen - - - -	225
	- - - - Tale of a Justice - - - -	227
	- - - - Tale of a Knight - - - -	228
	- - - - Vision of the next World - - - -	229
	- - - - Tale of Peter the Usurer - - - -	230
	ROLLE's, the Hermit of Hampole's poems - -	232
	- - - - Pains of the Infernal World - - - -	233
	- - - - Picture of Heaven - - - -	234
	An ancient religious poem - - - -	235
	Its tale of an apparition - - - -	ib.
	The PILGRIM, an old poem - - - -	236

CONTENTS.

xi

CHAP. II.

ON THE ENGLISH ROMANCES.

	page
Their extensive scope - - - - -	238
Their great popularity - - - - -	239
Fancy, the characteristic of the middle ages - - -	ib.
The English romances taken from the French - -	240
The most ancient - - - - -	ib.
Their character - - - - -	241
Beneficial effects of romances - - - - -	243
Their tendency to improve society - - - - -	244
Their progressive advance - - - - -	246
Attachment of our ancestors to them - - - - -	247
Romances in a nobleman's library - - - - -	248
Specimens of KYNG HORN - - - - -	249
- - - - - of IVAIN AND GAWAIN - - - - -	252
Troubadour Romances - - - - -	253

CHAP. III.

ON THE TROUBADOURS.

	page
Provençal poetry now remaining - - - - -	255
The earliest, our queen Eleanor's grandfather - -	256
Dukes of Aquitania - - - - -	258
William V. father of Eleanor, his singular life - -	259
Eleanor marries Louis VII. of France - - - - -	260
— goes to Palestine; her intercourse with Saladin -	261
— divorced from Louis, marries Henry II. - - -	262
Troubadour courts of love - - - - -	263
Queen Eleanor's judgments in her's - - - - -	265
Her daughter Maria's - - - - -	266
Classes of the Troubadours - - - - -	269
Their conduct, and the spirit of their poetry - -	270
Richard I. and Henry II. favor them - - - - -	273
Their destruction in the Albigensian war - - -	277
Origin of their language - - - - -	278
of their poetry - - - - -	279
Aquitanian romance of the eighth century - -	284
Their connexion with Bretagne - - - - -	285

CHAP. IV.

POEMS OF JOHN GOWER.

A. D.		page
	Influence of the Troubadour and Italian poets on	
	English poetry - - - - -	287
	Petrarch's letter to an English chancellor - - -	288
1338.	GOWER's birth - - - - -	291
1408.	death - - - - -	292
	poems - - - - -	ib.
	His literary merit - - - - -	ib.
	His CONFESSIO AMANTIS - - - - -	293
	Its plan - - - - -	296
	Its interesting tales - - - - -	298
	His description of dancing with his lady - - -	299
	of parting with her - - - - -	ib.
	Another effusion - - - - -	300
	His romantic gallantry - - - - -	ib.
	A false thought - - - - -	302
	Extract from his Tale of Canace - - - - -	ib.
	of Constance - - - - -	303
	of Iphis - - - - -	306
	of Midas - - - - -	308
	of Demophoon - - - - -	310
	of Narcissus - - - - -	312
	Extract from his Tale of the King of Armenia's	
	daughter - - - - -	313
	The philosophical merit of his poem - - -	316
	ANALYSIS of his CONFESSIO AMANTIS - - -	318

CHAP. V.

LIFE AND POEMS OF CHAUCER.

A. D.		page
1340.	Probable date of his birth - - - - -	323
	His appointments - - - - -	324
	He takes a new lease in 1399 - - - - -	327
	His complaint of his imprisonment - - - - -	ib.
	His adversities - - - - -	328
	Notices of his habits, in his poems - - - - -	330

CONTENTS.

xiii

A. D.		page
	Chronology of his works uncertain - - -	332
	His own intimations concerning them - - -	333
	His TROILUS AND CRESEIDE - . - -	334
	The grief of Troilus - - - - -	336
	His parting from Creseide - - - - -	ib.
	His emotions afterwards - - - - -	337
	Further extracts - - - - -	338
	Portrait of her distress - - - - -	341
	Diomed courts her in the Grecian camp - - -	342
	And seduces her to forget Troilus - - -	343
	Chaucer's ASSEMBLY OF FOWLES - - -	344
	COMPLAINT OF THE BLACK KNIGHT - - -	347
	Chaucer's DREAM - - - - -	348
	FLOWER AND THE LEAF - - - - -	353
	PROLOGUE to the Canterbury Tales - - -	356
	PALAMON AND ARCITE - - - - -	358
	Remarks on Chaucer's works - - - - -	361
	Praise of him by his contemporaries - - -	364

CHAP. VI.

THE WORKS OF JOHN THE CHAPLAIN, OCCLEVE, AND LYDGATE, &c.

A. D.		page
	JOHN THE CHAPLAIN - - - - -	365
1410.	His Metrical Boetius - - - - -	ib.
	THOMAS OCCLEVE - - - - -	367
	Extracts from his poems - - - - -	368
	His account of his annuity from the Exchequer -	370
	His picture of the manners of his day - - -	371
	His picture of his poverty - - - - -	ib.
	JOHN LYDGATE, born about 1375 - - - - -	372
	His portrait of his youth, from his TESTAMENT -	373
	- - - - - of his mature age - - - - -	374
	His STORIE OF THEBES - - - - -	375
	The Scottish poets of this period - - - - -	379
	Henry Bradshaw's poems - - - - -	380
	Reflections on the progress of our poetry - -	382
	Hymn of St. Francis to the Sun - - - - -	386

CHAP VII.

ON THE POEMS ASCRIBED TO THOMAS ROWLEY, A PRIEST OF
BRISTOL, IN THE REIGN OF EDWARD IV., BY THOMAS
CHATTERTON.

	page
Rowley's Poems, produced in 1768	389
Mr. Canynge's ancient chest opened in 1727	390
Chatterton's birth, 20th Nov. 1752	391
He discovers the ancient MSS.	392
He mentions them as Rowley's	394
His disclosures of them	396
The Song to Ælla	399
Opinion upon them	402
His suicide, 24 Aug. 1770	404
The Tournament	405

CHAP. VIII.

ON THE DRAMATIC REPRESENTATIONS OF THE
MIDDLE AGES.

	page
Roman drama discontinued for its immoralities	412
Hroswitha's Comedies, in 990	414
Mysteries in France, in eleventh century	ib.
Play of St. Catherine, at Dunstable, in 1110	415
Miracle Plays in the thirteenth century	ib.
Others after that period	418

CONTENTS.

xv

BOOK IX.

HISTORY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND PROSE COMPOSITION.

CHAP. I.

PROGRESS OF THE TRANSITION FROM THE AGLO-SAXON TO THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE.

	page
Romans did not extirpate the Britons - - - -	420
The British language intermixed with Latin - - -	ib.
Anglo-Saxon language superseded it in England - -	421
Danish invasions made little alteration - - - -	ib.
Norman French becomes the language of the court, the great, the upper clergy, and the law - - - -	422
It had predominated in Gaul after its subjection to the Romans - - - - -	423
And was adopted by the Northmen under Rollo - -	ib.
The structure and mechanism of the Anglo-Saxon - -	424
Unnatural position of its words - - - - -	426
Its other characteristics - - - - -	427
Its confusion of grammar - - - - -	429
Its inflections begin to be disused - - - - -	431
Its inversions also - - - - -	ib.
Other changes that marked its transition into English - -	432
Chronology of the transition - - - - -	433
Norman never the language of the English populace - -	ib.
Anglo-Saxon continued till the death of Henry I. - -	434
It begins to change under Stephen - - - - -	ib.
Further changes under Henry II. - - - - -	435
In the style of the ORMULIN - - - - -	ib.
In the treatise on the Passion of St. Margaret - - -	436
In Alfred's Proverbs - - - - -	ib.
In Layamon - - - - -	437
In the Life of St. Margaret - - - - -	ib.
The transformation of Anglo-Saxon into English - -	ib.

CHAP. II.

SPECIMENS OF THE PROGRESS OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE
AND PROSE COMPOSITION, FROM THE WRITINGS OR
SPEECHES OF THE VARIOUS CLASSES OF SOCIETY.

	page
The specimens of the progressive English language in our poetry - - - - -	439
Period of the disuse of the Norman language in England	440
Reign of Edward III. the era of the complete predominance of English - - - - -	441
CHRONOLOGICAL SPECIMENS of our prose composition -	ib.
1200. Specimen from Alfred's Proverbs - - - - -	ib.
1280. - - - - - from Robert of Gloucester - - - - -	442
1349. - - - - - from the Hermit of Hampole's Crafte of Deyng - - - - -	444
- - - - - from his treatise on Tribulation - - - - -	ib.
1356. - - - - - from Sir John Mandeville's 'Voiage' -	445
1382. Style of the populace in the insurrection of Wat Tyler - - - - -	446
1380. Specimen from Wicliffe's Postils - - - - -	447
- - - - - of his Prodigal Son - - - - -	448
1385. - - - - - from Trevisa's translation of the Polychronicon - - - - -	449
- - - - - from his translation of a Sermon - - - - -	ib.
1386. - - - - - from the Petition of the Mercer's Company to Parliament - - - - -	450
1388. Specimen from the Sermons preached at St. Paul's Cross, by Maister Thomas Wymbilton - - - - -	451
1397. The duke of Gloucester's written Confession - - -	ib.
Specimens from Chaucer's Testament of Love -	453
1399. Speech of the parliamentary deputies to Richard II. Richard's answer - - - - -	454
Speeches of Henry IV. - - - - -	456
1404. Petition of the earl of Northumberland - - - - -	ib.
1430. Henry the Fifth's Will - - - - -	457
1490. Caxton's preface - - - - -	ib.
The above specimens shew the style of all classes -	458
Holcot's Philo-biblon - - - - -	459
INDEX - - - - -	463

HISTORY OF ENGLAND.

BOOK VII.

HISTORY OF RELIGION IN ENGLAND.

CHAP. I.

*Origin and Nature of the Ecclesiastical System
established in England.*

THE introduction of Christianity into England, was followed by the establishment of that peculiar system of doctrines, ritual, and polity, which, from its origin in this island, and main support, may be called Papal Christianity. It was continued and augmented with renewed zeal by the Norman ecclesiastics, and pursued by the successive rise of new opinions, assailing its various parts. The innovations were for a long time repressed as fast as they were produced; yet each made some impression; and at last, from the accumulated agency of many attacks and many causes, which neither the skill nor the power of the old establishment could resist, that great religious revolution was accomplished in Great Britain, which distinguished the sixteenth century. As these causes began to operate with perceivable

CHAP.
I.

BOOK
VII.HISTORY
OF RELI-
GION IN
ENGLAND.

effect, during those middle ages to which this Work is devoted, it will be our duty to trace them to their sources, and to explain their successful agency.

I am aware that there is no object of human thought more difficult to discuss with satisfaction, either to the writer or to his readers, in the nineteenth century, than that which is the subject of this chapter. So much imposture, so many errors, so much fanaticism, and such fierce passions, and therefore so many mischiefs, have been connected with religion, by its real and pretended friends, that a portion of the world turn from it with aversion, or view it with a jealous irritability. On the other hand, it has been experienced to be so grateful to the feelings, so necessary to the comfort, so satisfactory to the intellect, and so auxiliary to the moral conduct and social tranquillity of millions: It is so promotive of the intellectual progression of our present nature, and so essentially connected with the happiness of our next state of being, that not only the mass of the people, but the most cultivated taste, and the most capacious talents, have delighted to cherish its gracious revelation, expect it to be fairly and reverentially treated, and are displeased that either sarcasm, reproach, or even unfriendly criticism, should be exerted against it. That Christianity is of the divine origin which it claims; that it is ever pouring blessings upon mankind; that it is worthy of its heavenly Author; that the world, without it, could never have attained its present intellect and improvement, and that it will yet fulfil all the moral hopes, and realize the brilliant promises, which its inspired oracles announce, is the animating belief of its friends, and of the most impartial investigators of its truth and sacred oracles. But

the historian cannot be blind to the errors with which it has been connected, nor to the evils which its per-
 versions and misapplication have occasioned ; and, as
 it would be disingenuous to disguise, so it would be
 absurd to omit them. They form the substance of
 the history of Christianity in every country, and have
 been so interwoven, not only with the principal trans-
 actions, but with the mind, of every part of modern
 Europe, that the series of our national historiography,
 especially from the accession of Henry II. would be
 incomplete, if they were left unnoticed. Most of
 these errors and evils flowed from the excitation and
 changes of the mind, and its sensibilities, as new
 agencies, even those tending to improvement, began
 to operate upon human nature. The principle of
 melioration, which has been made inseparable from
 mankind, and is ever pursuing their existence, cannot
 act upon any part of society while so many vices or
 errors remain, without producing temporary evil in
 some directions, and resistance and re-actions in
 others, that will be often injurious. But in every age
 the inconveniences were lessened, and the benefits
 have been multiplied, till that great mental revolu-
 tion, already alluded to, took place, of which the
 English Reformers were the most active authors, and
 to which England is indebted for a large portion of
 its present prosperity.

That Christianity was imparted to the world at the
 time when its promulgation would be most beneficial,
 is a circumstance which the philosopher requires,
 which the Christian believes, and which history at-
 tests. But, independently of this consideration, it
 cannot be disputed by any, and it is most important
 to reflect, that at whatever period Christianity had

CHAP.

I.

ORIGIN OF
 THE ECCLE-
 SIASTICAL
 SYSTEM IN
 ENGLAND.

BOOK
VII.HISTORY
OF RELI-
GION IN
ENGLAND.

entered the world, whether two thousand years earlier or two thousand years later, it must have found that world full of other opinions, prepossessions, habits, systems, hierarchies, governments, and individual manners, with many of which it must have allied, and with many conflicted, and by most, if not by all of which, it would be perverted. Some it would change, and others modify ; but with the larger mass of existing feelings, customs, reasonings and prejudices, even tho erroneous, it must have associated, and by them have been deteriorated. The tares and the wheat must have grown up together. Nothing but another universal destruction of mankind, and a new created world, could have presented to it a fair, clear, and unspotted tablet, either in the heart or in the mind, for its uncontaminated impressions ; and such a world would have been without the cultivation, the knowlege and the judgment, which are requisite for human improvement, and which experience only can supply. These considerations, which are equally applicable, and therefore must be recollected, in the thirteenth century as well as in the first, will not only explain many imperfections, but also account for many extravagancies in which our pious ancestors indulged. At its first dissemination, and in every period of its progress, all that its great Author and ablest friends could accomplish, would be to plant it firmly in the heart and mind, as that heart and mind were then shaped and stored ; to multiply its fruits, and to extend its ramifications as abundantly as the characters and circumstances of the day would admit ; and to leave to the gradual effect of time, and to the beneficial operations of its own and of other agencies, which could successively

be brought into action on mankind, and to that superior impulse which is ever benignly operating on all that can feel and think, those ulterior harvests of improvement, both in the intellect and the conduct, for which our nature is avowed to be destined, and to which it has already made encouraging advances. The kindly influences may be resisted by human perversity, but they benefit all in some degree, and lead many to the fullest extent of their attainable possession.

Christianity came into the world at a period more full of excited intellect than any preceding age had witnessed, and therefore at a time the best fitted for its mental reception, comprehension, and circulation. But it was intellect, which, even in the most cultivated, was marked with many singular and erroneous habits and prejudices, and which, in the bulk of the human population, was every where disfigured by passions and mistake. The paganism and the philosophy of Greece and Rome, as well as of the eastern nations, were alike replete with false theories, misdirected feelings, and erring beliefs. The barbarous tribes which, from the Grampian hills to the mountains of Caucasus, encompassed the Roman civilization, were still more enveloped in savage ignorance; and therefore abounding in wild absurdity. Among all these, Christianity more or less penetrated; and with all those incongruous and varying medleys of opinions and habits, which in every one of the diversified individuals of these different nations made up his individual mind, Christianity, as fast as it was imparted, was compelled immediately to intermingle. Hence, as it became colored and shaped by the Oriental mind in the East, the Ægyptian in Ægypt, the

CHAP.

I.

ORIGIN OF
THE ECCLE-
SIASTICAL
SYSTEM IN
ENGLAND.

BOOK
VII.

HISTORY
OF RELI-
GION IN
ENGLAND.

Grecian in the Peloponnesus, and the Roman in the Roman empire, so it afterwards had to amalgamate with the Gothic, the Lombardic, the Frankish, the Anglo-Saxon and the Anglo-Norman, in the various regions where the peoples classed by these appellations had been diffused. The inevitable consequence was, and must be, that in every age of Christianity, and therefore in the middle ages, it was impossible to see the pure and perfect intellect in beautiful activity, or Christianity radiant with all its celestial excellencies. We find neither virtue untainted, nor reason undebased, nor piety unalloyed with human weaknesses. Every one will think and act as he pleases, however ignorant or mistaken; most of us, if not all, are but partially good or wise, even while we are religious; and therefore, in every part, associations of error and truth; the good intention and the foolish superstition; the heretic, the sceptic, the dreamer and the zealot; vanity and pride; the lover of money and the lover of pleasure; the hunting for power and the pursuit of war, perpetually offend our taste and excite our resentment. Hence the history of religion, like the history of human intellect, and like all our biography and political transactions; like every part of the history of human nature, is the mixed history of great virtues and great vices, many absurdities and much wisdom; the external form frequently changing; the blemish or the corruption lessening and returning; the turbid confusion gradually purifying, but as yet never wholly subsiding into the perfection desired.

As we advance to our own times, the chaos exhibits some perceptible arrangement. The light of knowledge begins to diffuse its commanding influence:

judgment multiplies ; the moral sensibilities receive a progressive education, and a moral taste becomes the character of the social mind. As these meliorating agents increase in the world, the reign of error becomes feebler. The heart and the head watch and correct each other. Some false opinions and prejudices expire for ever ; others become associated with more just combinations of thought, by which in time they are extinguished ; and better reasoning and nobler views succeed. It is true, that even in this meliorating process, fresh errors, from the very freedom and activity of the mind, will arise, as fresh knowlege pours in. The mind must combine its improved accessions with its more imperfect stock : altho its ignorance is diminished, it is not removed. The philosopher will still be like the moon, half enlightened and half dark ; and in the most exalted mind, an incongruous medley will still exist. The universal improvement of the intellect is a process too immense and too complicated to be rapid. But the progress goes on. The errors, which further acquisitions of knowlege, or new combinations of thought, have been always found to produce in one age, are diminished or removed by the larger accumulations of experience and research, and the more correct associations, which the mind, ever revolving its stores, cannot but receive or occasion in the next. Hence the mind of the nineteenth century cannot be, and cannot think, like the mind of the thirteenth. It has not the same materials, not the same feelings, not the same views, not the same impulses, nor the same surrounding habits and occurring circumstances. Whether we will or not, we must be different from our ancestors. Thus, every age varies from the preceding, and, wherever intellectual culti-

CHAP.

I.

ORIGIN OF
THE ECCLE-
SIASTICAL
SYSTEM IN
ENGLAND.

BOOK
VII.HISTORY
OF RELI-
GION IN
ENGLAND.

vation is pursued, rises above the former. Augmented produce must increase the riches of a country, whatever the theorist may dream or argue. The more that time advances in his flight, the more the human intellect has ever multiplied its knowledge, and improved in its judgment, its moral feeling and moral taste, and so must continue to do, unless some tremendous convulsion were to engulf all our libraries, obliterate our experience, palsy our faculties, stultify our thinking power, or whirl us into eternal night. Yet progress is not perfection; new errors will accompany the new improvements; the novelties of thought are oftener its caprices than its wisdom. It is easier to fancy than to judge. Speculations only require exercise of mind, but the discovery of truth demands accumulated knowledge, patient investigation, comparing discernment, and matured deliberation. Hence, the greater the activity of national mind, the more mistakes and theories and labyrinths it is ever creating and destroying; and these results cause our progress to be tardy, our intellectual deviations to be numerous, and the ultimate results always uncertain, and at times alarming. In these reflections, the history both of papal Christianity and the opposing heresies; of all science and of all literature, as well as of our present tendencies and prospects, may be said to be delineated.

To raise for a time an intense feeling of religion, as of any other enthusiasm, or in any human pursuit, is neither difficult nor sufficient. It is effected now by the Bramin superstition in the Yogeas and Jagernaut victims of India, as it was in ancient times among the whole nation of Ægypt, under its monstrous system of bull and goat worship, cat-veneration, and dog-headed deities. In the middle ages, it

filled Europe with monks, and Asia with pilgrims and crusaders. It animated St. Dominic, the Pope, and their emissaries, in the murders of the Albigenses. It has supported, and now revived, the Spanish inquisition, and hallowed the Moloch sacrifices of Auto da fés. Energetic impulses and violent emotions are the companions of all our excited passions, and are as temporary as they are rarely beneficial. True piety avoids and dreads them : her natural and healthful state is like the serenity of the vernal dawn, or of the summer's eve,—mild, gentle, soothing, and calmly radiant. Man is made to be a religious being ; and the general aspect of nature and course of things have, in every age, invited and urged him to be so. The human heart is so constituted, as to be responsive to the sacred touch, to be obedient to the heavenly call. This always inclines us to the love of what we adore ; and to a kind benevolence towards all which the common parent has created. But this effect and state, in all their purity and intelligence, are the later improvements of our religious progression. At first we seek a worldly guide ; we are attracted by worldly examples and wants, and yield ourselves to some worldly and accessible director. When the sensibility has been kindled, it has always to be applied ; and it turns to the nearest tutor ; and therefore it begins the system and lessons which its family, its neighborhood, or its country, most reveres for its path, objects, and government. Hence arises the difficulty, which every heart has felt, and every age lamented. In the direction of this great principle, the mind ignobly, but unavoidably, follows the imperfect reason, feeling ; views and habits of the day. Within the period which this History embraces, it was taught to employ its

CHAP.

I.

ORIGIN OF
THE ECCLE-
SIASTICAL
SYSTEM IN
ENGLAND.

BOOK
VII.HISTORY
OF RELI-
GION IN
ENGLAND.

sincere energies in building monasteries; in procuring and venerating dead men's bones; in enriching the church; in idle and endless processions; in superstitious rites; in useless pilgrimages; in crusades of danger and death; and in obeying the Machiavellian mandates of a distant Pope. Religion, heavenly as its origin has been, sublime as its principle always will be, and great and glorious as are all its future objects; still needs, in every age, as much wisdom as impulse. But it can have no more wisdom for its companion than the age affords, and must have its earliest instructors from it. When the judgment is weak and the knowledge small, the fervor of the principle will connect it as much with folly as with truth; and the pious man, with all his sincerity, will offend many by his absurdities, as well as edify by his goodness. But let not him who may disbelieve, triumph in this admission: he also partakes in full measure of the imperfections, the vices, and the imbecilities of his day; his follies will differ in kind, but are at least equal in amount, and will injure society to a greater extent, if ever they attain a paramount power. The whole of every existing generation are examples of this same truth. We are all infected, more or less, with the imperfections of our own age; we can only improve as human nature generally advances, and that has hitherto always been slow progress, amid continual deviations; frequently pausing, sometimes in part retroceding, and often producing mischief and confusion, from which a succeeding age has to extract the benefit, or to re-open the obstructed paths. Some individuals will indeed, often unconscious of their importance, take the lead in the progress, the heralds or the authors of its success; but unless the popula-

tion with whom they live can in some measure accompany them, their efforts will be vain, and their march, for some time, solitary or forgotten. Most of the great benefactors of mankind have been unpopular while they lived.

Thus, from its earliest infancy, Christianity was, as one of its authorized teachers declared it to be, a light shining in a dark world—the partial illumination of a clouded and disfigured mind; therefore always surrounded and confused with fantastic images and obscurity. Every system of tenets and ceremonies, every reasoning and conjecture, every custom and form, that were added to its own simple and primitive precepts—and mind can never act on any subject, in any age, without attaching to it some of its own temporary and varying produce—must have shared and exhibited the imperfections, errors and ignorance, which always abounded even among the most improved part of the population of the world, from the first century to the middle ages.

These general principles will account for the nature and history of the religion of our forefathers. The good intention was never deficient, for the earnest and impassioned, under every system, may be sincere. But, from the intellectual barrenness and absurdities of their time, and still more from the peculiar circumstances with which they were surrounded, their fervent piety was continually misdirected. It nourished many wild and injurious superstitions, much hierarchal tyranny, many useless ceremonies, and much wilful priestcraft. Not that the superstitions were always imposture, or the ecclesiastical despotism, in every instance, disingenuous or mischievous; they were oftener the results of the mutual state or expe-

CHAP.
I.

ORIGIN OF
THE ECCLE-
SIASTICAL
SYSTEM IN
ENGLAND.

BOOK
VII.

HISTORY
OF RELI-
GION IN
ENGLAND.

rienced necessities of the age. The deceivers and the deceived were for a long time equally honest, equally ignorant, and equally benefited. They believed alike, that the natural phenomenon which they could not explain was a miraculous event. They both thought the relic a wonder-working agent. The priest, who exorcised, was as convinced of the effective power of his cross, holy water, Ave Marias, or Salve Sancte Thomas, as his humblest votary. It is impossible to read the lives and works of the religious men of the middle ages, without being convinced of this truth. When, indeed, the beams of emerging knowlege began to dissipate these delusions, cunning, trembling at the loss of its ancient gains, may have begun its impostures. But these were unnecessary while all were credulous, and therefore were not resorted to, till increasing scepticism made them indispensable to the continuance of former power; and then the use of them but accelerated their discredit. The struggle to revive them now, will but terminate in the same result.

The Christianity of our Anglo-Norman ancestors was thus, amid much right feeling, mixed with much imperfection and mistake. It was a motley system, colored and distorted by the effects of the circumstances, errors and fancies of the preceding times, as well as of their own. Christianity, indeed, must always be a jewel of inestimable value. It has not even yet been duly appreciated. But it will be also more or less grotesquely or beautifully set, according to the proportion of excellence which the general knowlege, reason, and sensibility, have attained. It has to be connected with existing governments, taught by existing men, and practised amid existing manners.

Ambrosia itself, if poured thro a polluted channel, would still be but a mixture of ambrosia and impurity. The Jewish nation exhibited the operation of this principle, after their Exodus; the Christians, soon after their Lord's beatification. Nor has its influence yet ceased. To behold the sun in all its splendor, our vision must be perfect; our own atmosphere unclouded.

CHAP.

I.

ORIGIN OF
THE ECCLE-
SIASTICAL
SYSTEM IN
ENGLAND.

It would occupy an undue proportion of the present Work, to trace all the superstitions and controversies of our forefathers, to the particular circumstances, customs, and prejudices of their own or preceding times, which contributed to give them birth: It will be sufficient to have hinted the principle of the investigation, and to annex some general illustrations on the more striking features of our forefathers belief.

Among the anterior prepossessions of the human mind which most affected Christianity, one great and yet unavoidable cause of its corruptions and controversies, was the rivalry and long contiguity of that specious but immoral Paganism, which had grown up with the aid of the proudest intellects of ancient times, had been interwoven in all their habits, amalgamated with all their literary compositions, adapted to all their feelings, and made interesting to all their passions; and which even the conversion, and establishments, and prohibitory decrees, of Constantine, could not extinguish. Julian was led into his apostasy from Christianity by the secret lessons of the Heathen orator and philosopher Libanius, and his senses were impressively acted upon by the rites of the idolatrous temples of Greece; so that he worshipped Mercury in secret, while he yet retained the external appear-

BOOK
VII.HISTORY
OF RELI-
GION IN
ENGLAND.

ance of a Christian.¹ After Julian's death, we still find a Pagan made the governor of Cappadocia;² and subsequent to the same period, the governor of Rome, a man of distinguished literary talents, in conjunction with the *senate of that* city, ventured publicly to address Christian emperors, one of them of no small celebrity, Theodosius the Great—to restore the Altar of Victory, on which the soldiers might swear their oaths—to re-establish the Vestal Virgins—and to reinstate the ancient temples and their priests in their former property and privileges.³ A priest of Jupiter derided St. Jerom as a weak and foolish man.⁴ About the same period, we find the friends of Paganism in Alexandria strong enough, in revenge for the demolition of their temple to Bacchus, to sally out from their magnificent temple of Serapis, and attack the Christians.⁵ The Pagans, in many parts, resisted the order of Theodosius, for destroying their places of worship, and fought for them vehemently, in Arabia; Palestine, Phenicia, and Syria.⁶ Even after the imperial edict had been issued for the abolition of Paganism, the council of Carthage, in 401, felt it necessary to declare that temples and idols still existed, and feasts and dancings were made in their honor, which ought

¹ See Socrates Hist. l. 3. c. 1. Mesd. l. 3. c. 3. Amm. Marcell. l. 16. c. 5.

² St. Gregory Nazianzen, in his 61st letter, exhorts him to forsake Paganism.

³ The petition of Symmachus was addressed to Valentinian, Theodosius, and Arcadius. He says, 'We ask again for that state of religion which long benefited the republic.' l. 10. ep. 61. It is curious to mark his extravagant phrases of civility to the emperors: 'aeternitas vestra—numinis vestri.' Ib.

⁴ Jerom mentions this incident in his seventh letter.

⁵ Sozomen Hist. l. 7. p. 723. He describes this temple as distinguished for beauty and size. It was placed on a small hill.

⁶ Sozomen, ib. p. 725. In pulling down the idol temple of Bacchus, the bishop discovered to the people the contrivances used to impose upon them.

to be abolished.⁷ The colony of Suffetum put sixty Christians to death, because their Hercules was taken away.⁸ A Pagan interceded with St. Austin for his fellow-citizens at Calama, in 409, who had sacrificed to idols.⁹ The inhabitants of Madaura are noticed as being principally idolatrous.¹⁰ Synesius, who was converted in 420, had been a Platonic philosopher, and such his friend continued.¹¹ We find a heathen reasoner boldly telling St. Austin, that the way to reach God was to live well, and to procure the favor of the inferior deities by propitiatory sacrifices, that by them we may ascend to the Supreme Creator; but that as to the Christian Saviour, he could say nothing of him, because he did not know him.¹² Maximus, another heathen philosopher, contended in writing against St. Austin and Christianity. He admitted that there was but one God; but he pretended that this was the same whom the Pagans worshipped under several titles, to signify his several attributes. He could not endure that the Christians should prefer martyrs of obscure and strange names, before those immortal gods, whose names were so famous. And he sneeringly asked, who that particular deity was, whom the Christians supposed to be present even in secret places?¹³ As it was made a capital offence, punishable by death and forfeiture of property, to use the ancient sacrifices,¹⁴ these were discontinued; and many Pagans, deprived of their ancient temples, began gradually to frequent the Christian churches.¹⁵

⁷ Du Pin. Eccl. Hist. 4th Cent.

⁸ This is the subject of the 50th letter, ascribed to St. Austin.

⁹ See the 90th letter of St. Austin.

¹⁰ St. Austin, letter 232.

¹¹ St. Austin, letter 234.

¹² Sozomen Hist. l. 7. c. 20. p. 736.

¹¹ Du Pin, 5th Cent.

¹³ Ib. letter 16.

¹⁵ Soz. Hist. l. 7. c. 20. p. 736.

BOOK
VII.HISTORY
OF RELI-
GION IN
ENGLAND.

But that their opinions were industriously defended and circulated, even after their public worship was put down by law, we perceive by the continual writings which the subsequent Christian fathers found it necessary to compose against them, and by the prohibitions which the Christian fathers and councils repeatedly issued against the study of profane authors, from the dread and experience of their seductive effects.¹⁶ On the same principle, they discouraged music, theatrical representations, dancing, and painting; not from an aversion to these interesting arts, but because they were so combined with gross indecencies and Pagan superstitions, and so affected the popular feeling in favor of their ancient worship, that the Christian teachers felt it to be as important to discountenance them, as Plato, on his view of moral use, had banished Homer from his republic.¹⁷

The controversies, of which we are ashamed, and which have given to the sarcastic pen of an applauded historian its sharpest point, originated from the competition and contiguity of this vivacious Paganism, which, even in the end of the fourth century, such men as, Symmachus, Libanius, Eunapius, Ammianus Marcellinus, Zosimus, and Rutilius, maintained with vigilant acuteness, with great versatile ingenuity,

¹⁶ As St. Basil, in his 24th homily; Isidore of Pelusium; and the Council of Carthage, in 398.—St. Jerom dissuaded Eutochius from reading the classical authors; and was himself convinced that he had been attacked by a violent fever, as a punishment for reading Cicero and Plautus too solicitously. See his 22d letter. The reason given by Alcyon from Chalcocondylas, why the emperors caused several of the Greek poets to be burnt was, that in them ‘*amores turpes lusus et nequitiae aman- tium continebantur.*’ 1 Alc. de Exilio. On this principle, our Milton blamed Plato for recommending Aristophanes on account of his style. Areopag. p. 219. Holt. Transl.

¹⁷ When Paganism ceased to be dangerous, both music and painting, and also the drama, were revived, and greatly patronized by the Christian clergy.

sometimes with superior talent, and usually with rancorous acerbity.¹⁸

We reproach the Greeks for the disputes on the Trinity and Incarnation, which agitated and disgraced the first three centuries; and we reproach them justly, because they deserve our satire, for the giddy vanity, the proud presumption, the unchristian violence, the sophistical casuistry, and the declamatory rhetoric, with which they discussed their theories, and combated with each other. But the historian, in contemplating the polemical mischief, will trace their personal conduct of the dispute to the Grecian character, state of mind and education; and will observe, that the subjects of the discussion flowed naturally and necessarily from the new direction of thought which the Grecian intellect received from the introduction of Christianity.

When this blessed religion was first imparted, it found the civilized world either disdainful of all religion, or attached to the worship of visible gods, made as beautiful and impressive as the most tasteful art, operating on the richest materials, could produce; and to the belief of a celestial hierarchy of many gods and goddesses, occasionally obeying the thunder-bearing Jupiter, but multiplying, almost without limit in their government of the human world, and of all its regions, woods, gardens, rivers, families, and seas. Nor was this system the fancy of the mere vulgar. It was the belief of all the intellectual and philosophical world, which admitted any reli-

CHAP.
I.

ORIGIN OF
THE ECCLESIASTICAL
SYSTEM IN
ENGLAND.

¹⁸ The intolerance of Paganism, after it began to be in danger, was fierce and implacable. It was displayed repeatedly in the persecutions of the Roman emperors. Julian's prohibition to the Christians, to study the ancient classics, is another instance. And the same vindictive spirit appears in many passages of the authors above mentioned.

BOOK
VII.HISTORY
OF RELI-
GION IN
ENGLAND.

gion; it was supported by all the polities and governments on the earth. And the more Christianity spread, the more zealously did philosophy attempt to defend and support its polytheistic system, and to prove it to be as compatible even with reason and happiness, as it was venerable from its authority and antiquity. We have the feeling of the ancients expressed in the lamentations of the old man on the departure of his idols,¹⁹ and in the sarcasm of the philosopher on the martyrs of the Christians.²⁰

Even after Christianity had imparted almost a new intellect to the world, on the subjects of Deity, providence, and moral feeling, in the religious compositions of the Jewish and Christian prophets and apostles; the philosophers, who continued Pagans, only used the sacred illumination to reform and refine their ancient system, not to abolish it. That a mind even educated to Christianity, could yet prefer heathenism, we perceive in the example of Julian; and the classical polytheism has, in our own superior days, been not only publicly adopted and maintained by a literary man of some attainments and research,²¹ but has been countenanced by one of the most sceptical of our philosophers,²² and visibly regretted by

¹⁹ He had been converted; but on his idol being removed, he burst into tears, crying out, 'O miserable man that I am! they have taken away my god! I shall not know how to adore or pray to him any more!' Cassian apud Du Pin, 5th cent. p. 12.

²⁰ See before, p. 14, note 13.

²¹ Mr. Taylor's translations of Aristotle and Plato shew his intellectual industry. His version of the hymns ascribed to Orpheus display a power of easy and not inharmonious versification; and his prefatory dissertation endeavors, with the help of Porphyry, to present his favorite system in its most attractive point of view.

²² Mr. Hume says, 'If we examine, without prejudice, the ancient heathen mythology, as contained in the poets, we *shall not* discover in it any such monstrous absurdity as we may at first be apt to apprehend. Where is the difficulty in conceiving that the same powers or principles, whatever they were, which formed this visible world, men and animals,

one of the most critical of our historians. It may be doubted if it would have ever entirely departed from the world, if the Gothic irruptions had not swept it away in their general desolations.²³

To attack this polytheistic system, it was not enough to shew that it was absurd to worship senseless 'idols of wood and stone, the work of men's hands, which have eyes but see not, feet that cannot walk, and ears that cannot hear.' The improved Grecian, acute tho fantastic, and sagacious tho perverted; and the Roman, whose intellectual quality was pre-eminently a strong common sense, willingly abandoned this indefensible folly, and being driven from it, denied, as eagerly and as ingeniously as the subsequent Catholic, that they worshipped the visible image in the adoration which they applied before it to the heavenly personage, whom they believed that it represented.²⁴

CHAP.
I.

ORIGIN OF
THE ECCLE-
SIASTICAL
SYSTEM IN
ENGLAND.

produced also a species of intelligent creatures, of more refined substance and greater authority than the rest? That these creatures may be capricious, revengeful, passionate, voluptuous, is easily conceived; nor is any circumstance more apt, among ourselves, to engender such vices, than the license of absolute authority. And, in short, the whole mythological system is so natural, that in the vast variety of planets and worlds contained in this universe, it seems more than probable, that, somewhere or other, *it is really* carried into execution.' Nat. Hist. Rel. vol. 2. p. 442. 8^{vo} ed. 1804.—Mr. Gibbon has not concealed his partiality.

²³ This opinion is strongly impressed on my mind, by the fact, that in the fifth century, after the taking of Rome by Alaric, St. Austin thought it necessary to write his elaborate book *De Civitate Dei*, to prove against the objecting Pagans, that the calamities of the empire were not owing to the establishment of Christianity. It was to repel the same objection, that Orosius, about the same time, composed his *History*. We cannot suppose that they took so much trouble against visionary antagonists. If such men as Symmachus, Libanius, and Rutilius, could prefer Paganism to Christianity, in the fourth and fifth centuries, so might others of the same cultivated rank of mind in the following ages, if the Gothic deluge had not overwhelmed it in the West, as the Arabian torrent afterwards did in the East and South.

²⁴ Porphyry's book, *De Abstinencia*, labors to make this system as philosophical as it will bear; see the extract in Taylor's *Orpheus*, Diss. 46. 64. With what eloquent and enthusiastic unintelligibility Proclus could philosophically expatiate on this subject, may be seen in the same Dissertation, 74. 83.

BOOK
VII.HISTORY
OF RELI-
GION IN
ENGLAND.

It was therefore necessary to wrestle with the system itself; to disprove the existence of the deities who were presumed and venerated; to persuade mankind to disbelieve that there were such beings, under any supposition, either allegorical, historical, physical or physiological, as Juno, Minerva, Apollo, Hercules, Neptune, Flora, Ceres, Pluto, and all that rabble of fancied divinities, which made the sneering Sage remark, That it was easier in Greece to find a deity than a man.²⁵

But in order to accomplish this important victory—in order to dispossess polytheism, in theory as well as in practice, of its long-continued empire over the human mind—the first Christians who philosophised were unavoidably led to occupy themselves with considering and discussing the nature of Deity itself—a mighty, boundless, absorbing subject! WHAT is this AWFUL BEING, invisible in his person, conspicuous in his works; inferible from every plant, felt by every heart, wanted by all that think? Of majesty the most tremendous, from the extent of his creations, yet displaying kindness, attention and care the most minute, in having condescended to make the insects and living atoms that almost elude our sight—who thus alone

²⁵ What a mental Antæus the ancient Christians had to combat in this vivacious Paganism, we may infer from Mr. Taylor's deliberate conclusion in our days: 'I persuade myself, enough has been said in this Dissertation, to convince every thinking and liberal mind, that the Greek theology, as professed and understood by the Greek philosophers, is *not* that absurd and nonsensical system, represented, by modern prejudice and ignorance, as the creed of the ancients.'—I once wondered at Mr. Taylor; but I am satisfied, that if the fear of popular ridicule could have been removed, he would have had many supporters: Indeed, in what does the passage just quoted from him, differ from the feeling of Mr. Hume, noticed above in note 22? Plotinus is another instance of a powerful and active mind, that even after Christianity had so fully exposed the absurdity and mischief of the ancient Paganism, could yet most warmly attach itself to the fancied deities, idols, mysteries and worship, which sound reason can now only think of to ridicule.

unites the most unlimited extent of intellect with the most unwearied and universal application of it, and for the benefit of the smallest points of perceptible existence, as well as of its grandest theatres? What is this wonderful nature, cause of all being, source of all beauty, author of all good; of whose presence we are every where sensible, whose footsteps we can every where trace, whom no greatness can equal, and yet by whom no littleness is overlooked; ever providing his multifarious creatures with the means of their well-being; ever causing the wisely organized, but complicate and counteracting laws and movements of the various parts of his universe, to continue to act in due subordination and order, that their beneficial results may never and no where be intermitted? What is this gracious First Existence, who desires the mental and moral improvement of his rational creatures, and is always putting in action the most effective agencies that their nature will from time to time admit of, to secure and increase the progression of which they are capable, and for which he is solicitous? Who is this all-pervading and all-potent Deity, that deigns, himself, to regulate the government of his innumerable worlds; whom all nature yearns to know, combines to praise, and anxiously contemplates? The Greek Christians resorted to their scriptures for the desired information, and from them inculcated the sublime truth, primeval, but long abandoned, that GOD was a spirit, the father as well as the sovereign of his works, ONE all-presiding Deity, eternal and self-existent; who, tho existing in his awful and gracious personalities, had never delegated his sovereignty to inferior divinities; and who permitted no heroes, dæmons, genii, penates, or other

CHA:
I.ORIGIN
THE ECCLESIASTICAL
SYSTEM
ENGLAND

BOOK
VII.
HISTORY
OF RELI-
GION IN
ENGLAND.

imagined beings, to share it with him. This topic was the perpetual field of debate between the Grecian Christian and the Grecian polytheist. The latter could admit neither the spirituality, singleness, attributes, nor exclusive sovereignty and providence of the Great Jehovah, and eagerly disputed them ; and still more the awful hypostatic union, implied, not described, frequently alluded to, always believed, but rather intimated than expressed in the sacred volume, lest it should give polytheism a new basis, or again produce rival worship and competing votaries. The greatest contest with Paganism was on the verity and reason of its polytheistic system : and the divine personalities revealed and exemplified by our Saviour, made the collisions of thought on the subject at that time more minute and pertinacious. The Christian, maintaining the discussion wherever he diffused his religion, was thus compelled to make the Divine Nature the principal subject of his contemplation and controversy. But the Grecian mind, then universally educated to wordy subtleties and disputatious sophistry ; with vivacity and ingenuity for its great characteristics, and possessing neither extensive knowledge, nor sound judgment, nor correct feeling ; could not pursue this mighty theme with wise moderation, with self-diffidence, or true reasoning. The Trinity, the Incarnation, and the spiritual influence, were mysteries that excited the egotism of the Grecian disputer, instead of his forbearance and humble veneration. Impatient to distinguish himself, by exploring, thro argument, or by supplying, thro fancy, what argument could not elucidate, and what fancy ought not to have approached, he confused himself with his own subtleties and loquacity. From combating

with Pagan antagonists, the Christian theologians, prompted by pride, vanity, irritability or interest, soon turned to conflict with each other. Credit, honors and profit became attached both to the battle and the victory. Ambition saw a path to the distinctions it loved, to the preferment it coveted in these inexhaustible discussions, in which even succeeding emperors took different sides. New distinctions were taken; traditional opinions were recollected; the chimeras of imagination were put together, to have the credit of an original theory, in order to overpower their opponents, or to satisfy themselves, becoming every day more critical and more disputatious. Thus, as well to convert the Pagan world and to resist its hostilities, as to convince and please their own doubts and feelings, and to conquer and silence each other, and to gratify worldly passions and suit worldly interests, the disputes on the Trinity and Incarnation became, from the very state of the world at that time, the prevailing subjects of the first Christian literature and of the first Christian controversies, without any sanction, or encouragement from the divine religion itself. Indeed nothing could be more foreign to its spirit, object and tuition, than these useless conflicts—equalled only by the scholastic warfare of a future age. As the debates spread from province to province of the vast Roman empire, they became but the more complicated, because every region had cherished its peculiar notions on the theory of its ancient gods and worship,²⁶ which were now pressed on all

CHAP
I.

ORIGIN OF
THE ECCLESIASTICAL
SYSTEM IN
ENGLAND

²⁶ We have a specimen of the notions of ancient Persia, in the edict of king Sapor, in 380, against the Christians, on whom he caused a persecution of forty years. 'They abolish our religious doctrine. They teach men to worship one only God, and forbid them to adore the sun or fire. They use water for profane washing. They forbid others to be soldiers

BOOK
VII.HISTORY
OF RELI-
GION IN
ENGLAND.

sides into the general service; and Chaldea, Persia, Syria, Egypt, and India, each furnished speculations, which, being eagerly engrafted by misjudging enthusiasts on Christianity, became so many heresies, ever multiplying both the combats and the combatants. If we advert for a moment to the incomprehensible doctrines of the unbelieving philosophers, who were at the same time the fiercest opponents of Christianity, on the awful subject of Deity, we shall see that unintelligible verbosity, mistaken for reason, was the fashion of the day;²⁷ and that neither Christian nor Anti-Christian could avoid it, nor the endless disputes which were its natural consequences.

And as the early Christian controversies arose from the previous existence and companionship of Paganism, and the discussions which this fact com-

in the king's armies, or to strike any one. They permit all sorts of animals to be killed. They suffer the dead to be buried. They say that serpents and scorpions were not made by the evil being, but by God himself.' Assemanni, v. 1. p. 171. Another complaint was, that they would not eat the blood of what was sacrificed, nor consent to take publicly the juice of red grapes thickened instead of it, that the people might think they were eating it. Hence the Persian governor gave the threatened sufferers their choice: 'Adore the sun, which is our divinity; eat blood; marry; and obey the king; and you shall live.' They refused, and were murdered. *Ib.*

²⁷ I give Porphyry's sentiments in his own words, as translated by Mr. Taylor, who, as he admires, may perhaps understand him; a merit which, not being one of Porphyry's disciples, I cannot claim:—'God, intellect and soul, are, each of them, every where, because no where. But God is every where, and at the same time, in no place of any being posterior to his nature; but he is only such as he is, and such as he willed himself to be. But intellect is indeed in the Deity, yet every where, and in no place of its subordinate essences. And soul is in intellect, and in the Deity, every where and no where with respect to body. But body exists in soul, and in intellect, and in God. And though all beings, and nonentities, proceed from, and subsist in the Deity, yet he is neither entities, or nonentities, nor has any subsistence in them. For if he was alone every where, he would indeed be all things, and in all: but because he is likewise no where, all things are produced by him; so that they subsist in him because he is every where, but are different from him because he is no where. Thus also intellect being every where and no where, is the cause of souls.' &c. &c. Vide *Ἀποφυσιαστικὰ τὰ Νουτά*, p. 233, cited by Taylor, *Diss.* prefixed to his *Orpheus*, p. 34.

pelled and provoked, so the popularity and vicinity of the worship attached to it as inevitably seduced, or urged the Christian leaders to adopt many of its rites and ceremonies, from their connexion with public feelings and their influence on the popular conduct. The possession of the public mind being the object contended for, the public taste, and not the sacred writings, became gradually the dictator. Hence, as we recede from the apostolical age, and approach the fifth century, we find religion no longer the cherished and retiring guest of the improving heart, the consecrated employment of the private hour, and the secret governor of life—but transformed into a public spectacle, a pompous and splendid theatrical exhibition of vain and haughty actors, dazzling the eye, affecting the senses, and exciting the imagination. St. Jerom contrasts the anxiety to have well-built churches, sumptuously adorned with marble and gold, and presenting altars radiant with precious stones, with the little concern for good ministers within them.²⁸ The saints and martyrs were held up to veneration, like the deified heroes and emperors; prayers were offered to them for their aid and intercessions; and the eves of their festivals were distinguished by striking solemnities, and the aid of lighted torches was introduced to create impression by a nightly worship.²⁹ St. Chrysostom employed all the eloquence of his “golden mouth” to exalt the priesthood to an awful sacredness of professional character, that lifted them above ordinary mortals;³⁰ and the

CHAP.
I.

ORIGIN OF
THE ECCLESIASTICAL
SYSTEM IN
ENGLAND.

²⁸ See St. Jerom's second letter to his nephew, cited by Dupin, Eccl. Hist. 5th century.

²⁹ St. Jerom's 53d letter. Du Pin, ib.

³⁰ See St. Chrysostom's celebrated book on the Priesthood, which Suidas thinks superior in composition to all his other works.

dressess of the clergy were made as superb and imposing, as gold, gaudy colours, and varied jewels, could effect. The figures of men, animals, and flowers were gorgeously embroidered or glaringly painted upon them, alluring the gaze and exciting the admiration of the spectators.³¹ Supernatural effects were now ascribed to the ecclesiastical rites. The sign of the cross was declared to cure diseases, expel devils, and defeat enchantments.³² Holy water was used as if possessed of effects as magical. Incense, flaming tapers, images, pictures, votive gifts, pretended miracles, pompous processions, and religious pageantry, all used in Pagan worship, were addressed to the senses of the votary, as if the eye, not the heart and reason, were to be the source of his religion and the guide of his conduct.³³ It soon became to many a selfish and sensual profession. Christianity was in time so corrupted by the vicious habits of the world, with which it was combined, that we have the censures of St. Jerom for our testimony, that amassment of wealth had become a leading object with the clergy. They made merchandise with the goods of the church. Some became rich by turning monks; many, poor and mean before they entered the sacred order, were afterwards

³¹ Asterius Amasenus, in his first homily, describes the Grecians as wearing garments with 600 figures of animals upon them: so that, walking in public, they seemed like painted walls. 'You see there lions, panthers, bears, bulls, dogs, woods, rocks and hunters.' Some of the more devout had scripture histories woven in them. 13 Bib. Mag. Pat. p. 564.

³² The 13th Catechesis of St. Cyril Hierosol. ends with this assertion. p. 140. ed. Paris, 1631.

³³ There can be no difficulty now in allowing that Dr. Middleton has proved his point, of the use of Pagan rites in the Catholic worship, altho, as his antagonist contended, some of them had also been practised in the temple of Jerusalem. The corruption was inevitable. Devotion suggested, and at that time, seems to have been assisted by it.

distinguished for their affluence and pride. He tells us, that, tho the laws wisely prohibited the clergy from taking legacies, yet that the useful restraint was eluded by the instrumentality of trustees.²⁴ Canon after canon was issued to forbid the clergy from being usurers. The repetition announces the inveteracy of the practice. During the period which this Work describes, all worldly ambitions, interests and enjoyments, took the governance of the human heart in the larger portion of both laity and clergy, and religion was allowed to be only the exterior appendage, superficial, moveable, little valued, and more disliked and feared, than desired or pursued; yet while we censure former times for this unwise inconsistency, ought we not to consider, whether the moral and social picture of our own age, would be very different in this respect from that of our ancestors; or whether we should not find reason to exclaim, with the comic satirist—‘ Sister! sister! ah! sister, every way.’ Human passion also too often perverted zeal into violence, and made martyrdom almost a suicide and a folly; giving at times a justification to persecution, if any cause could justify a crime so deadly.²⁵

The state of Christianity which we have been describing and accounting for, could not continue with-

²⁴ See St. Jerom's second letter to his nephew, cited by Du Pin, in his 5th century.

²⁵ We have an instance of this provoking conduct in the behaviour of Abdas, a Christian bishop in Persia. Isdegerdes, a descendant of Sapor, put a stop to his severe persecution in 420, when this prelate re-excited the hostility by burning down the temple of the sacred fire, which the Persians adored. The king threatened to destroy all the Christian churches in his dominions, unless Abdas rebuilt what he had demolished. The bishop refused, and Isdegerdes then put him to death; razed all the churches of the Christians in Persia, and began a merciless persecution, which his son and successor, Varanes, continued with still greater inhumanity. Theod. v. 5. p. 39. Al. Butler's Lives, v. 3. p. 324.

BOOK
VII.HISTORY
OF RELI-
GION IN
ENGLAND.

out increasing deterioration, nor without some revolution being indispensable to the preservation and improvement of the mind and morals of mankind. Panegyriized as the works of St. Ambrose, St. Jerom, and St. Austin have been—the most respectable of the Latin fathers, perhaps the most useful of all—who just preceded the barbaric irruptions, and in whom the mind of the age appears in its best form, for certainly the wordy nonsense of Porphyry and Proclus was inferior—yet can we read the compositions of these really worthy men, without perceiving that their habits, reasonings, knowlege, views, spirit and conduct, are not those which enlightened intellect would wish to be the general character of mankind? The verdict both of piety and reason has been long since given. They may suit the papal monastery; but they are not qualified to take the lead in a world of intellect, knowlege, sensibility, and good taste.³⁶

The needful revolution occurred in the irruptions and settlements of the Gothic nations; and this awful dispensation, calamitous to the existing generation, put human life and history into a new position, and human thought, education and manners, into new channels. It eradicated the ancient Paganism, removed much other old and inveterate mischief, and introduced some temporary evils; but that it threw

³⁶ As it is fair to vindicate the fathers from all unjust imputations, I concur with Mr. Alban Butler in thinking, that they have been rather misrepresented about their denial of the antipodes. He admits that St. Austin, *Curt.* l. 16. c. 9; Bede de *Principiis*, l. 4; and Cosmas *Ind.* opposed them. But he remarks, that Philoponus, *de Mundi Creat.* l. 3. c. 13, demonstrated, before the modern discoveries, that the greater part of the fathers teach the world to be a sphere, as St. Paul, Gregory Nazianzen, and Gregory Nyssen, and Athanasius; and that the antipodes are actually mentioned by St. Hilary on *Psalms* 2. n. 32; by Origen, *de Princip.* l. 2. c. 3; and by St. Clement the Pope.

the population of Europe into a state of society more fitted for universal improvement, the attainment of that improvement satisfactorily demonstrates. A rapid glance at the ecclesiastical changes which it created, and a view of the peculiar religious structure to which it led, will assist to complete our historical survey.

CHAP.
I.

ORIGIN OF
THE ECCLE-
SIASTICAL
SYSTEM IN
ENGLAND.

Of all the novelties which followed the dissolution of the Roman empire, the elevation of the bishop of Rome to the mental and ecclesiastical sovereignty of Europe, was in its consequences the most important. The papal government is indeed a remarkable phenomenon in the history of human nature. It presents the political singularity of a power perpetually broken by short reigns, disputed successions, conflicting rivalries, and, even when most regular, by the incessant elections and accessions of unrelated individuals, which would seem to attach to it every character of human weakness; and yet amid all these fragments of sovereignty and elements of contradiction, constantly advancing, for several ages, in authority and influence, exactions and usurpations. What invisible spirit always knit such means of feebleness and disorder into that unity and force of action which made Europe so often tremble at its exerted power, and so long, tho often murmuring, yet respectfully bend in submission to its will?

We know that on the Grecian emperor's preceding the reason of his age, by destroying the images then venerated in religious worship, the bishop of Rome, with the approbation of the West of Europe, separated himself from the Eastern empire, and began the foundation of the papal royalty. Pepin's solicitation of his sanction for usurping the crown of France,

BOOK
VII.HISTORY
OF RELI-
GION IN
ENGLAND.

increased both his ambition and importance; and Charlemagne's acceptance of the dignity of emperor from his hands, recognized and established his political predominance. The gift of the title of king of Hungary, in a subsequent age; the deposition of Henry the Fourth of Germany; and the arrogant excommunications and attempted depositions of other monarchs; were but natural consequences of the admitted power of creating the first new emperor of the West.³⁷

The donations, by Pepin and Charlemagne, to the Pope, of the exarchate of Ravenna and the contiguous provinces, made him a temporal prince of respectable revenue and political power. But altho these possessions may have increased his appetite for more, and certainly provided abundant means of pomp and luxury, yet there was nothing in the extent of the gifts which could have produced the dominion which the Popes acquired over the mind of Europe. The magnitude of the granted territory was not sufficient even to preserve them from the hostility of the little Italian princes near them, or to subject any part of Italy lastingly to their power. Hence, altho aided

³⁷ Dr. Milner thus states the grounds on which the pontiffs acted, and the divines reasoned, on these depositions:—'Heretofore, the kingdoms, principalities and states composing the Latin church, when they were all of the same religion, formed, as it were, *one Christian republic*, of which the Pope was the accredited head. Now, as mankind have been sensible at all times, that the duty of civil allegiance and submission cannot extend beyond a certain point; and that they ought not to surrender their property, lives and morality, to be sported with by a Nero or an Heliogabalus; instead of deciding the nice point for themselves, when resistance became lawful, they thought it right to be guided by their chief pastor. The kings and princes themselves acknowledged this right in the Pope, and frequently appealed to him to make use of his indirect temporal power. In latter ages, however, since Christendom has been disturbed by a variety of religions, the power of the pontiff has been generally withdrawn. Princes make war upon each other at their pleasure, and subjects rebel against their princes, as their passions dictate.'—End of Relig. Controv. part 3. p. 131.

with all the veneration and the resources which they afterwards acquired from other countries, the Popes were neither able to subdue any additional provinces, nor effectually to defend themselves against a resolute invader. What then was their human support? It was the mental condition—it was the social wants of Europe, which gave such predominance to the holy see. The sceptre was rather placed in its hands by the spontaneous wish and actual necessities of those over whom it was wielded with such formidable effect, than seduced by its arts, or extorted by its ambition. Its subjects were willing slaves, petitioning it to assume its dominion, from an universal experience of the necessity and the benefit. Particular popes certainly indulged extravagant ambition; and many, by devices of human subtlety and priestcraft, extended and riveted the chains, to the governance of which they succeeded. But every where the despotism they exercised and perpetuated, was, at least originally, invited and welcomed by those whom it alternately cherished and depressed. No tyranny was ever established that was more unequivocally the creature of popular will, nor longer maintained by popular support.

That it preserved the influence to which it had arrived, by means that, however often well meant, yet operated to increase the superstitions, to perpetuate the ignorance, and to lessen the morality of its subjects, is incontestable to those who trace manners to their causes; and that it has repeatedly maintained its domination by a jealous and unrelenting severity towards its opponents, can be denied by no one who has read the history of the middle ages of Europe. Its sovereignty, wherever questioned, has been sin-

CHAP.

I.

ORIGIN OF
THE ECCLESIASTICAL
SYSTEM IN
ENGLAND.

BOOK
VII.HISTORY
OF RELI-
GION IN
ENGLAND.

gularly stern and merciless. Other systems have been occasionally persecuting; the Romish church, when its power was large enough to be exerted with political safety, has been so uniformly. The Albigenses, in the thirteenth century; the Hussites, in the fourteenth; the Lollards and Moriscoes, in the fifteenth; the Reformers of Europe, in the sixteenth; the Huguenots, in the seventeenth; all concur to prove that the papal hierarchy has been in every age a master, who considers all variety of religious opinions as impious rebellion, whose penal visitations are sanguinary, whose displeasure is irremissible and fatal.²⁸

But, while we admit that its existence as a dominating church has been for some time past incompatible with the improvements of society, and thence infer, that its beneficial effects were limited to the ruder periods, which admitted and needed its sovereignty; yet it will be a just candor not to forget the obligations which it has conferred upon Europe; the evils which it conquered and removed; the intellectual and moral blessings which it introduced; and the political advantages which it every where occasioned, especially when the pure and disinterested desire of benefiting mankind, abstracted from all selfish views, was its guiding principle. Many of the institutions that arise, are usefully adapted to the

²⁸ Thus, September 1815, the Belgian Catholic clergy were opposing that part of the constitution prepared by the king of the Netherlands, which allows religious toleration in his dominions. But the conduct of the Catholic clergy in Spain, since Ferdinand's restoration, and since, in Portugal, are still more demonstrative of the truth of the opinion expressed in the text. So essentially intolerant is papal Christianity, where the wiser spirit of the government does not coerce and predominate over its hierarchy. This intolerance does not arise from any natural inhumanity of spirit in the papal churchmen; for they are usually as urbane and benevolent as the rest of society, as individuals, but from the impossibility of the peculiarities of their system standing wherever the human mind has freedom of religious worship and investigation.

CHAP.
I.ORIGIN OF
THE ECCLE-
SIASTICAL
SYSTEM IN
ENGLAND.

wants and conditions of mankind. In one age, one system is a general benefaction; in another, a different one is required, because the benevolence, the integrity, or the intellect, which made the preceding one beneficial, has departed from it. It is the spirit, more than the form of an institution, that makes it efficacious. If the animating and directing soul leave the body, the corpse that remains is inert, and must dissolve. The papal monarchy and hierarchy, sometimes actuated by motives purely good, and operating sometimes with sound judgment, conferred in those moments great blessings on mankind.³⁹ But as soon as wealth, power, and luxury, had corrupted it, these uncelestial spirits produced uncelestial conduct. More vices than virtues began to flow from the sovereignty of the tiara, and then its sceptre was broken. Its imperious influence has now ceased; and in political power and foreign sovereignty, from its actual misuse and great pervertibility, ought not to be revived. But the memory of the benefits which it has produced to Europe, should not be forgotten. Among these, the diffusion of Christianity thro Europe, tho with injurious appendages — the encouragement of

³⁹ I am perfectly willing to admit, and gladly insert Dr. Milner's intimations of the benefits produced by the Popes, and their general merit, because I think they are true and able statements of the favorable side of the papal picture:—'Their supremacy prevented schisms, and served as a center of union, and an ensign of orthodoxy; they were labourers in propagating the Gospel in every part of the globe; they vigorously protected Christendom, at several periods, from the Saracens, Tartars and Turks; they supported the divine law, and the canons of the church; they civilized the nations they converted; they were (often) the chief patrons and promoters of literature, and of the polite arts; they formed the Christian states into one great community, and for many ages preserved the liberties of Europe, by maintaining the balance of its powers; if they created some wars, they prevented or stopped more; they enforced the Trêve de Dieu; they protected the oppressed Jews, and ransomed many captives. Out of 225 pontiffs, not more than 30 have dishonored the chair, while double that number have been persons of eminent virtues, and heroic sanctity.' *End. Relig. Controv.* p. 35-39.

BOOK
VII.HISTORY
OF RELI-
GION IN
ENGLAND.

its literary education — the maintenance of its ecclesiastical dignities against royal and baronial power, often sheltering the infant vegetation of public liberty, and fostering its growth, especially in England—its exhortations against cruelty in war—its repeated preservation of the independence of Italy—its large contributions to the civilization of the dark ages—its frequent interferences to pacify differences between sovereigns—its decisions of innumerable disputes and discussions—many of its canon and council laws and regulations, and its encouragement to the diffusion of the civil law, must be remembered with gratitude, as positive benefits of the papal sovereignty, which counteracted the effects of its vices and errors, and even at last led to their removal.⁴⁰

But conceding to the Popes, and to the members of their hierarchy, great general integrity and philanthropy, and a conscientious desire to do what they believed to be right and useful ; yet, with every sin-

⁴⁰ One of the pleasing instances of the beneficial influence of the popedom on Europe, in its barbarous state, appeared in their procuring the universal recognition and observance of those stated intervals of peace and amity wherein the 'Pax Dei' prevailed.—Perhaps I cannot give a fairer specimen of the benefits which the Popes often conferred upon Europe, than in a short summary of some of the provisions of the decrees of one of them, in 1179:—That no archbishop visiting his parishes shall have more than 50 persons in his retinue, no bishop more than 30, no cardinal more than 25, no archdeacon more than 7, no decani more than 2. That no Christians shall serve as pilots or steersmen in Saracen ships. Tournaments prohibited. That there shall be truce from the fourth hour after sun-set to the second hour after sun-rise, and from Advent to the Octave of Epiphany, and from Septuagesima to the Octave of Easter. No church burial to those who in war, like Pagans, destroy and lay waste all things, nor regard churches or monasteries, nor spare women or children, any age, or either sex. No Jew or Saracen to have Christian slaves. No clergyman to have many churches, nor to take secular procurations. Usurers forbid the communion. Peace to be kept towards the clergy, merchants and husbandmen, and towards the animals and things used in agriculture. Prelates to have, in every cathedral, a master to teach the clergy and poor scholars gratis, and to provide him with a sufficient maintenance. *Decreta Alex. Hoveden*, pp. 582-589.

erity and purity of intention, they could not be wiser nor more informed than the age they lived in, or than their situation, education, and means of information, permitted. Like every other individual, they shared, and could not but share the imperfections of their day ; and therefore the religious system which they upheld thro Europe, may be expected to display more sincerity than wisdom, more zeal than intellect, more contrivance than virtue. It may have suited the temporary wants of society at the æra of its formation, but it must be incompatible with our own.

CHAP.
I.

ORIGIN OF
THE ECCLE-
SIASTICAL
SYSTEM IN
ENGLAND.

Under this predominating and infallible Pope, the father and the despot of all the church, the sacred order was regimented in two great divisions, the monastic and the secular clergy, dependent on him, but independent of each other. To these, in the thirteenth century, were added a new and anomalous class, the ambulatory or mendicant friars, who diffused themselves thro the lowest as well as the highest classes of society, and thus renovated the vigor and influence of the papal government, when its power began to dissolve ; tho they also, unaware, contributed to its downfall. The monasteries were governed by their abbots and priors ; the secular clergy by their bishops and archbishops.⁴¹ These chiefs of both these divisions of the hierarchy, were parts of the baronial parliament in England. The hierarchy having been first established in an empire founded on military despotism, and in which most of the subordinate authorities partook of the character of

⁴¹ How completely subordinate our archbishops of Canterbury were to the Pope, we may infer from the oath of one of them, on taking the pall in 1382 : ' I swear that from this hour, as long as I live, I will be faithful and obedient to the blessed Peter, and to the holy apostolic Roman church, and to my lord Urban VI. the Pope, and his successors canonically entering,' &c. Wilkins' Concil. vol. 3. p. 155.

BOOK. their chief, a despotic principle pervaded its system.
 VII. and directed its spirit, from the papal monarch to the
 lowest priest.

HISTORY
 OF RELI-
 GION IN
 ENGLAND.

The great foundation of the dominion and influence of the Pope and his various clergy, proceeded more from the popularity of the doctrines and ceremonies which he supported or established, than even from the benefits that resulted from his influence. These doctrines and ceremonies, shaped and colored by the mental prepossessions that accompanied them, had been sagaciously made interesting to the feelings, and adapted to the prevailing opinions of mankind.

It is one of the intellectual beauties of Christianity, that it is in its leading incidents peculiarly addressed to the sympathies of our nature ; for, by this means, it is adapted to cling tenaciously to the human heart, while that heart continues impressible by the interesting, the tender, the benevolent, the disinterested, and the pathetic. That its benign Author should condescend to be born of a lowly and virtuous maiden, and should begin his mortal life a little babe, the most interesting object of creation—That the first annunciation of this great event should be from angels, singing, ‘ Peace and good-will towards men’—That the great Teacher of mankind should select for himself the simple and lowly state of unpretending poverty ; live with his earthly parents a dutiful son ; subject himself to feel all the wants, weaknesses, defective education, and growing improveabilities of our nature, and remain in such voluntary humiliation that he had not even where to lay his head—That in his public life he should turn from wealth and greatness, and seek out the sick, the needy, the ignorant, the miserable, and the penitent, that is,

the great mass of his human creation, in order to relieve, instruct and improve those, whom the world before him had disdained and deserted, and whom the world since his death has only lately begun, adequately, to consider—That, in the instances of John and Lazarus, he should deign to form an affectionate friendship, with two virtuous minds in the lowliest walks of life, as if to invite us to cherish the virtuous sympathies with the good of all classes, tho he has not made an imperious duty of feelings, which are only amiable, when rightly placed and rightly acting, and which, depending so much on situation, accident and connexion, could not justly be made positive or universal precepts—That, unmoved alike by menacing power and malignant hostility, by popular acclamation and bigoted derision; equally avoiding the offered honors, and forgiving the ingratitude of his countrymen, he should firmly and deliberately proceed to attest the purity of his mission, and to seal its mysterious purposes, by submitting to personal sufferings, and painful death—That this death of agony he should meekly and patiently endure, amid every circumstance of terror, contumely and disgrace, and yet employ his last breath in petitioning his Almighty Father to pardon his infatuated murderers; kindly urging their only apology, ‘because they know not what they do:’—These facts, with many others in his biography, present such a succession of appeals to our sensibility, independent of all the diviner considerations and results which are connected with his mission; that no bosom which believes their truth, can resist their impression. The Greek and Roman clergy early felt their effects, in common with all mankind, and based

CHAP.

I

ORIGIN OF
THE ECCLE-
SIASTICAL
SYSTEM IN
ENGLAND.

BOOK
VII.HISTORY
OF RELI-
GION IN
ENGLAND.

their religious system on the universal sympathy. But before the irruption of the barbarians, from the nature of the distorted mind of the day, the Greeks had spoilt the best themes of Christianity, by the egotisms of their rhetoric, and the selfishness of their polity. The barbaric intellect, being totally illiterate, was ruder and more simple. It was too inert to comprehend a loquacious and gaudy eloquence, polished periods, or abstract and wordy argumentation; but it could intensely feel the common sympathies of the human heart; by these it could be actuated and governed: therefore, on these the Catholic clergy founded their leading ceremonies and exhortations, and with wonderful effect. Their own hearts being sometimes their instructors, they influenced others by what affected themselves.

If the Christian world had then been as intellectual as at present, its ecclesiastical chiefs, rarely in their own accomplishments below the age they influence, would have founded their system on those parts of their great Legislator's life and tuition, which would have united faith, sensibility, and reason, in the most efficacious operation for the improvement of the heart and mind of cultivated man, and which would have provided for its own melioration as that improvement advanced. But, semi-barbarians themselves, and having to act on barbarians, they could neither conceive nor inculcate the best and wisest form; nor would the best and wisest form for an enlightened age have been, perhaps, the most useful for the first instruction of an ignorant and brutish period. Many of the fathers themselves, and ancient Christian writers, even after the second century, had been Pagans up to their manhood; and many

were barbarians by birth, or had followed worldly professions.⁴⁸ They imbibed Christianity with sincerity and zeal ; but it was still Christianity mixing itself with their minds, already stored with other prepossessions, and formed by other systems and associations. Christianity improves, and may regenerate, but does not new-create the individual. The blood of a noble animal may be transfused into the body of an inferior one, but its ancient form and features continue. A Christian Kalmuck will still have a Kalmuck mind, tho greatly ameliorated and enlightened by his new instruction. So the christianized Pagan, African, Gaul, Spaniard or Goth, of the fourth century, notwithstanding his conversion and subsequent illumination, must have displayed that mixture of good and of imperfection, of new instruction and of former peculiarities, which all humanity has hitherto experienced. It is therefore vain to expect wisdom without alloy from the ancient fathers and popes, either in their writings, their conduct, or their institutions. Too solicitous to be popular, they frequently stooped down to the age, instead of raising it even

⁴⁸ As Tertullian, an African ; St. Cyprian, an African, and teacher of rhetoric ; St. Gregory Thaumaturgus, whose father was a violent heathen ; Arnobius, a professor of rhetoric in Africa ; Lactantius ; and St. Paulinus, a Gaul ; were all converted Pagans. St. Pachomius the author of the regular monastic life, was born of Pagan parents, and for some time had been a soldier ; Synesius was a Platonic philosopher ; St. Austin, an African, studied rhetoric at Carthage, and was professor of rhetoric at Milan ; his father was a Pagan ; St. Hilary was a Gaul, bred up in the Pagan religion, and not converted till after his marriage and the birth of a daughter ; St. Ambrose was a Gaul, had been a pleader of causes, and was governor of Liguria, when he was suddenly made a bishop by popular force ; St. Jerom, born near Pannonia and Dalmatia ; Apollinarius, an Egyptian rhetorician ; St. Gregory Nyssa, at first a teacher of rhetoric ; St. Amphilocus, a lawyer and a judge ; Severus Sulpicius, the Sallust of Christianity, had been in great repute at the bar ; and Prudentius, whose verses were so much studied by the Catholic clergy, was a Spaniard by birth, and had been a judge. See Du Pin's Eccl. Hist. and Cave's Hist. Liter.

BOOK
VII.HISTORY
OF RELI-
GION IN
ENGLAND.

to their own degree of merit. A Pope was gently reproached in the eighth century, for suffering pagan ceremonies to continue, under his own eyes, in Rome itself.⁴³ Even Gregory the Great desired his missionaries to humor some of the Anglo-Saxon superstitions, by giving them a Christian application.⁴⁴ In other countries, and in their general system, they studied what would affect, rather than what would improve.⁴⁵ We know that this policy has been pursued by the most zealous missionaries of the Catholic church in modern times,⁴⁶ altho, wherever it operates,

⁴³ Our Boniface, the active missionary of Germany, ventures even to tell the Pope, that pagan customs were kept up in his own city, Rome, and pagan superstitions practised; and he urges his paternity to prohibit 'istas paganias' there. Ep. Bonif. 132. ap. Mag. Bib. t. 16. pp. 106 & 117.

⁴⁴ Gregory's solicitude to attract the Anglo-Saxons to Christianity by connecting it with their ancient superstitions, appears in his letter to Melitus. He advises him to let their idolatrous temples remain, but purified by holy water; and as they were accustomed to sacrifice oxen to their idols, he recommends that huts of boughs of trees should be made round these temples, turned into churches, and that their joyous festivals should be celebrated there, but on the birth-day of the saint whose relics were in the church; so they should kill their animals, not to the devil, but ad laudem Dei. Bede, l. 1. c. 30. p. 71.

⁴⁵ This is frequently remarked by Mosheim, and is visible in many parts of the ecclesiastical history of the middle ages.

⁴⁶ The temporising conduct of the Catholic missionaries to China and elsewhere, is well known. The conduct of the Jesuits in India I would rather state from a modern Catholic's authority, who was a missionary there for years. The abbé Du Bois thus describes it: 'At their first outset, they announced themselves as *European Brahmins*, come from a distance of 5000 leagues, for the double purpose of imparting and receiving knowledge from their brother Brahmins in India. They made it their study to imitate that tribe. They put on a Hindoo dress of yellow color, the same as that used by the Indian religious teachers and penitents; they made frequent ablutions. When they shaved themselves in public, they applied to their foreheads paste made of sandal wood, as used by the Brahmins. They abstained from every kind of animal food, feeding entirely, like Brahmins, on vegetables and milk. The friars of other religious orders settled at Goa and Pondicherry accused the Jesuits of tolerating and winking at all kinds of idolatrous superstitions among their proselytes; and with having themselves rather become converts to the idolatrous worship of the Hindoos, by conforming to many of their practices and superstitions, than making them converts to the Christian religion. These charges had some degree of foundation.' Abbé Du Bois Lett. on Christ. in India. Lond. 1823. p. 7, 8.

it deteriorates Christianity,⁴⁷ and establishes a deteriorated system.⁴⁸ From the first hour of the first adoption of this worldly cunning, it ensured the prevalence of intellectual evil in religion, pursuing and spoiling its intellectual good: and the feasts of the ass, the feasts of fools,⁴⁹ and most of the immoral and debasing mummeries; disgusting frauds, and lying legends⁵⁰ that were allowed or used in the Christian world, prove, that what might have been expected from reasoning, actually took place in practice.⁵¹

CHAP.
I.

ORIGIN OF
THE ECCLESIASTICAL
SYSTEM IN
ENGLAND.

⁴⁷ We have a most lamentable proof of this deterioration in the corruption even of sacred history, in the Persian Life of Christ, composed by St. Francis Xavier, for the converts whom he made in the East Indies. In this work he incorporates with the Gospels the wild and fabulous tales of the legends, and others, as true history. For instance, he states, that the Christians keep Mary's birth-day on the 8th Sept. because a person every year heard on that day a wonderful melody in heaven, and upon inquiring, was told by an angel, that it was Mary's birth-day, p. 21.—This is inserted as a real fact, and as authentic history.—That Augustus Cæsar, on our Saviour's birth, sent for a sibyl, to know if any one had been born in the world greater than himself: That the sibyl, nine days afterwards, taking him aside, shewed him at noon a golden circle round the sun, and in the middle the virgin holding her child to her breast; and told him that babe was greater than he was; a voice at the same time pronouncing in the sky, 'This is the altar of heaven.' p. 73. It abounds with falsehoods of this sort, interwoven with the sacred history. See Xavier's *Historia Christi, Persice Conscripta*, published by L. de Dieu.—The Persian History of St. Peter, believed to be by the same author, is written on the same plan, to the utter confusion of all historical truth.

⁴⁸ What a defective, weak, and in many respects degrading, system of morals and religion was invented by the popes and the clergy of the middle ages, and inculcated as real Christianity, may be seen in St. Gregory's *Morals*, the great text-book of those times—their *Manuels de Piété*—their popular legends—and the works of their famous casuists.

⁴⁹ That these abominable feasts should have been not only allowed but encouraged, and partly acted by the clergy of the middle ages, fully evince the truth of the reasoning in the text, that an imperfect age can only teach and relish a very imperfect morality and religion. See the note at the end of this chapter.

⁵⁰ The Koran itself, and the wild reveries and traditions of the Mohamedan zealots, do not contain more untruths than the legends of the papal hierarchy, and the lives of the saints who figure in the Roman martyrology, and fill the hundred folio volumes published by Bollandus.

⁵¹ To have an adequate conception of the monstrous fables invented and taught as sacred truths by the friars of the middle ages, I would refer the reader to only one collection, the '*Alcoran des Cordeliers*,' which

BOOK
VII.HISTORY
OF RELI-
GION IN
ENGLAND.

human sympathies put into phrase; which, however simple or homely, was rarely read or heard with un-availing effect.⁵⁵

Our venerable Lydgate has left us a stanza of this description :—

Beholde, O man, lyft up thyne eye, and see
What mortal payne I suffrede for thy trespas.
With piteous voyce I cry, and say to the,
Beholde my woundes; behold my bloody face.
Beholde the rebukes that do me so menace,
Beholde myne enemyes that do me so dyspyce,
And how that I to reforme the to grace,
Was lyk a lame offred in sacrifice.

Lydg. Test. MS. Bib. Reg. 18. D 11.

⁵⁵ A longer effort of a pious muse, written in a MS. of the monastery of Shene, under a crucifix, may be here noticed :—

Wofully araide
My blode, man!
For thee ran;
Hit may not be naide,
My body blo and wanne,
Wofully araide.

Behold me
I pray the
With all thyne hole reason
And be not hard hertid;
For this encheson,
That I for thi saule sake
Was slayne in good seson
Begiled and betraide
By Judas fals treson:

Unkindly intretid,
With sharp corde sore fretid,
The Jues me thretid:
They mowid; the spittid
And dispisid me.
Condemned to deth,
As thou maist se.

Thus nakid
Am I nailid
O man! for thy sake.
I love the;
Thenne love me;
Why sleepest thou? Awake!
Remember, my tender hert
The rode for the brake.
With paynes
My veins
Constrayned to crake.
Thus was I defasid:

Hearne has printed these in his Appendix to Fordun, vol. v. pp. 1397-9.

Thus was my flesh rasid;
And I to deth chasid;
Like a lambe led into sacrifice.
Slayne I was in most cruel wise.

Of sharp thorne
I have worne
A crowne on my hed.
So rubbed
So bobbid
So rufulle; so red.
Sore payned,
Sore strayned,
And for thi love ded.
Unfayned,
Not denied by blod for the shed.

My fete and handis sore,
With sturde naylis bore;
What myght I suffer more,
That I have sufferde, man! for the?
Come when thou wilt; and welcom
Dear brother! [to me.
None other
Thing I desire,
But give me thi hert;
For to rewarde mine hire.
I am He that made the erth,
Water and fire.
Sathanas that sloven
And right lothely sire,
Hym have I overcaste;
In hell prisoner bound faste;
Where ay his woo shall laste.
I have purvaide a place full clere,
For mankind whom I have bought
dere.

CHAP.
I.ORIGIN OF
THE ECCLE-
SIASTICAL
SYSTEM IN
ENGLAND.The
Madonna.

The birth of Christ was found to be a circumstance, which, like his death, touched the tenderest feelings of the heart. A beautiful mother, nursing an angelic babe, no eye could contemplate without sympathy melting into affection. The ancient clergy singled out this natural circumstance, but corrupted their Christianity by an idolatrous addition in giving to her a deifying character and worship, and making devotion to her one of the most prominent and sacred parts of their system. The earliest efforts of the arts in their humblest as well as in their most polished state, have been always employed by the papal hierarchy, to enforce this interesting but unwarranted and unjustifiable superstition. It was the intensity of this sentiment, which led the chivalrous gallantry of the barbaric mind to invest the Madonna with every attribute of purity, tenderness, pity, and condescension. The alarmed consciences of the violent ages, ever recollecting a thousand deeds of wrong and cruelty, turned, whenever awakened, with awe from a neglected Deity and a disobeyed Saviour, to propitiate and implore a kind and compassionate lady. To offend, and be forgiven, were natural occurrences in their intercourse with the earthly fair. It was delightful to suppose not only such a mediatrix in the skies, but to license their own indulgencies by believing that she could be always interested to forgive them. Eagerly, therefore, did the feelings, the fears and the hopes, of our rude forefathers, believe the Virgin Mary to be the queen of heaven, the sovereign lady of the angelic hosts, the empress of the world.⁵⁶ The Scriptures were little known and less consulted, and therefore

⁵⁶ She was mentioned and invoked by these titles, in the fourteenth century, in England.

BOOK
VII.HISTORY
OF RELI-
GION IN
ENGLAND.

were not supposed to be at variance with this theory; and even where they are found to be so, the papal clergy are unwilling to discountenance a worship from which they derive such great influence and advantages. Hence even among English catholics of the present day, and among those of enlightened France, the Madonna is still a favorite object of pious supplication. In every age, men tend to believe as they wish, and therefore willingly combined to place her as an effective goddess in the skies,⁸⁷ whose intercession with her Son was warmly urged for all her votaries, and who was even at last supposed to be almost the only channel of mercy here.⁸⁸ The clergy,

⁸⁷ Even Chaucer gives her the epithets of omnipotence, in his *Priere de Nostre Dame*, made, it is said, for the duchess of Lancaster:

Almighty, and all merciable queene!
To whom all this world fleeth for succour,
To have release of sinne, of sorrow, of tene;
Glorious virgine, of all floures, flour!
To thee I flee, confounded in errour.
Helpe and releve! Almighty debonaire!
Have mercy of mine perillous langour;
Venquist me hath my cruell adversaire.

Chauc. p. 399. Chalmers' ed.

⁸⁸ Chaucer so expresses himself in the above prayer, obviously not as his own invention, but as the common feeling of the day:—

Sooth is, He ne graunteth no pity
Without thee: for God, of his goodnesse
Forgiveth none, but it like unto thee.
He hath thee made vicaire and maistresse
Of all this world, and eke governess
Of Heaven: and represeth his justice
After thine will: and therefore in witenesse
He hath thee crowned in so royal wise.—Ib. 401.

I quote Chaucer, in preference to the divines of the day, on this subject, because he gives the popular and practical feeling upon it at the time when the fancy had reached its height, in England, and shews that the mediatorial and pardoning offices of our Saviour were then transferred to Mary. A few other lines may be quoted:—

Gracious maid and modir!
Help that mine fadir be not wroth with me.
For whan a soule falleth in errour
Than makest thou his peace with his sovereign.
Whoso thee lovest, shall not love in vaine,
That shall he find, as he the life shall lete.

observing how useful this opinion was to bring the wild imaginations and fierce spirits of the middle ages into a due subjection to religious impressions, and also themselves partaking of the general credulity, universally patronized and strenuously enforced it.⁵⁰ It was one of the papal delusions that was the last given up in this country;⁶⁰ and it still maintains in others its ancient impressions on the Catholic mind.⁶¹ Yet that it was a fatal deterioration to Christianity, and to the religious mind, must be obvious to every reasoner, especially when we consider one of the inferences to which it was applicable, and which seem to have been drawn from it.⁶² It has, however, been

CHAP
I.

ORIGIN O
THEECCLI
SIASTICAL
SYSTEM II
ENGLAND

We han none other melody ne glee
Us to rejoyce in our adversite
Ne advocat none, that will dare to prey
For us, and that for as little hire as ye,
That helpen for an Avemary or twey.
O treasorere of bounty to mankind!—
This world awaiteth ever on thine goodness
For thou ne failedst never wight at nede.

To you mine soule penitent I bring;
Receive me - - - Heaven queen! - - - &c. pp. 400-401.

⁵⁰ The archbishop of Canterbury's order, in the first year of Richard II. shews how she was represented and venerated: He orders his clergy to supplicate (devotissime exorent) 'the Almighty God, and his mother the glorious Virgin Mary, and all the saints (sanctos) and saintesses (sanctas) of God, with a pure heart and devout mind, in their prayers.' Wilk. Conc. vol. 3. p. 121. Thus not making the least distinction between the Deity and the Virgin Mary.

⁶⁰ The famous John of Gaunt, by his will, bequeaths his soul to the Virgin: 'Emprimes jeo devise m'alme a Dieu et sa tres douce miere Sainte Marie.' Royal and Noble Wills, p. 145.—In Richard the Second's reign, a woman alarmed the Scots, who were attacking Carlisle, with a tale, that the English army was approaching. They fancied that they saw the banners, and fled from the town. 'This woman was thought to be the glorious Virgin Mary, the patroness of Carlisle, who is always ready to help the inhabitants of Carlisle.' Knyght, 2675. This sentiment is from an author who was the contemporary of Wycliffe.

⁶¹ I observe that both Massillon and Père Bourdalaue usually begin their sermons by invoking her.

⁶² In one of the Contes Devots of the middle ages, St. Peter is represented as requesting the Virgin to intercede for the soul of a profligate monk who had just died, and whom the devils were seizing as their right-

BOOK
VII.HISTORY
OF RELI-
GION IN
ENGLAND.

attended with one benefit. It has given birth to some of the finest conceptions and representations of maternal beauty, tenderness, and sympathy, that the genius of painting could form, and outline and color, under its influence, express. It has but faintly inspired poetry and sculpture, tho it has linked some sweet and solemn melodies with our better feelings. But it has made the sister arts creative of so much beauty, pathos, dignity, grace, and affection, in its interesting and admirable Madonnas, that if it were on a less sacred subject we should forgive the error for the sake of the talent which it has excited, and of the attractive figures and eloquent expression with which it has animated the magic pencil so often to depict.

The friendship shewn by our Saviour to some individuals, and the condescending affection which he displayed for mankind in occasional expressions, and peculiarly in his last address,⁶³ raised more justly strong emotions in those, who possessed or could read the sacred volumes, and induced individuals to cultivate a tender and affectionate veneration. The clergy of the middle ages were neither inattentive nor insensible to these impressions; and some of them, emerging from the rabble of the popular saints,

ful property. He told her that all the saints, apostles, angels and martyrs had solicited his pardon in vain; but that what was impossible to them would be only a trifle for her to obtain. She applied immediately to our Lord, acknowledging that the monk deserved no favor, but yet strongly soliciting it. Our Saviour's compliance is thus represented:— 'He who formerly declared and with his own hand wrote this precept, Honor your father and mother, no sooner saw his mother approach, than he rose to meet and took her by the hand, and asked her what had brought her.'—After she had mentioned her wish, he is stated to have answered: 'Sweet mother! I cannot refuse you. Your will is mine. You may bring into heaven whomsoever you please. You are the mistress of it, and I ought not to object.' *Le Grand. Fabl. v. 5. p. 51-3.*

⁶³ St. John, c. 14-18.

composed works of impassioned and familiar devotion to him, that interested others as much as themselves; which still exist in our libraries,⁶⁴ and of which Thomas à Kempis is an improved and more cultivated example.⁶⁵ Our Lydgate has furnished us with an effusion of this sort.⁶⁶

CHAP.

I.

ORIGIN OF
THE ECCLESIASTICAL
SYSTEM IN
ENGLAND.

⁶⁴ A specimen of much earnest and affectionate devotion may be seen in the *Contemplationes Divinæ Amoris*, written in the tenth century, and printed in the *Bib. Mag. Pat.* vol. 5. p. 419. A few extracts will give an idea of the selected tenderness of the style: 'Dilexisti et amasti nos dulciter, benignissime Domine! fons veri amoris, dum carnem nostram mortalem humiliter induisti. Dilexisti nos, O amantium vita! quia mortem crudelissimam pro nobis miseris voluntarie sustinuisti—Nihil, Domine Jesu! amore tuo suavius; nihil dulcius; nihil utilius; nihil que jucundius. O fons immensæ dulcedinis, qui nunquam deficis—non est pater; non mater; non amicus—qui nos tantum dilexerit, quantum tu, Domine! qui fecisti nos. Absorbeat igitur, caro, amantissima, mentem meam ab omnibus quæ sub cælo sunt, melliflua vis tui amoris, ut toties tibi inhæream; solaque suavitatis tuæ dulcedine pascam, delecter et inebrier—Auxiliare mihi dignare, piissime Domine! qui non potes non amare et compelle rebellem animum meum ad te amandum, ut tibi placide serviam, et vitam, obtineam in amore sempiternam.' 420–422. He certainly connects a great deal of feeling with his devotion; tho he could not avoid obeying the impulse of his age, in deviating into a rhetorical effusion on the Virgin Mary, p. 478.

⁶⁵ A specimen of warm and earnest devotion occurs in the work of Gerhard of Zutphen, p. 839, one of the authors to whom Thomas à Kempis has been ascribed.

⁶⁶ O Jesu! Jesu! hear myne orison!

Bridle myne outrage under thy desciplyne.

Fetter sensuality: enlumine my reason,

To follow the traces of spirituall doctryne.

Let thy grace lead me right as a line

With humble heart to live to thy plesaunce.

And, blessed Jesu! ere I this life shall fyne,

Graunt of thy mercy, shrift—housell—repentaunce.

Let me not rest, nor have no quiete.

Occupy my soule with spirituall travayle,

To singe and say, 'Mercy! Jesu swete!

My protection against fiends in batayle;

Lettinge aside all other apparayle,

And in Jesu to put all mayne affiaunce.

Treasure of treasures! that may me most availe,

Graunte ere I dye, shrift—housel—repentaunce.

My faith, my hope to thee Jesu doth call;

Which glorious name shall never out of mynde.

I shall thee seek, whatever happe befall.

By grace and mercy I trust I shall thee find,

BOOK
VII.HISTORY
OF RELI-
GION IN
ENGLAND.

essential agency of the exalted Mediator.⁷⁰ This delusion was such an unauthorized assumption of the power of placing human beings in heaven, that we may wonder how it could have been accredited; but it may have prevented other follies. If the clergy had not introduced their saint-theory, which connected all that they feared and hoped with Christianity, the witch, the conjurer, the jogleur, the necromancer, and the astrologer, would have claimed the deserted ground, and have gained an ascendancy over the human mind, of which the high patronage and long continuance of witchcraft and astrology prove that it would be difficult to have dispossessed them. To link the miraculous agencies of saints and relics with Christianity, was to establish a competition which precluded the prevalence of magical superstitions, while Europe remained in ignorance; and as knowledge increased, the familiar perusal of the Scriptures destroyed in most the attachment and credulity to saintly mythology.⁷¹

Legends.

The legend was the necessary appendage to these superstitions. Fable is the natural aliment of fancy, and also its prolific offspring. The monasteries,

⁷⁰ Plutarch expresses the principle of the classical inventions in his remark, 'Those appear to me to have solved many doubts and difficulties, who have assigned to the daimons and genii an intermediate place in the creation—between gods and men; and thus have discovered a means of communion between us and the superior natures.' He leaves it undecided, 'Whether this doctrine originated with Zoroaster and the magi, or was brought by Orpheus out of Thrace.' Plut. De Defect. Orac. The litany of all the Catholic saints, 'ora pro nobis,' exactly suits Plutarch's intimations.

⁷¹ The ignorance of the clergy was a leading cause of their superstitions, not their impostures. In 1287 the synod of Exeter declared, that ignorance, the mother of all vices, was to be chiefly avoided. It therefore enjoined every archdeacon to inquire diligently what rectors, vicars or priests, suffered an "enormum defectum" in literature. We may form a notion of this enormous defect, when we find, that all that was exacted of the parish priests was, they should know the ten commandments, and be able to explain to the people the seven mortal sins, the seven sacraments, and the creeds. Wilk. Conc. vol. 2. p. 144.

CHAP.

I.

ORIGIN OF
THE ECCLE-
SIASTICAL
SYSTEM IN
ENGLAND.

embracing so large a part of the national population, contained every variety of human character and genius; and among their diversified fraternity, many individuals of vivid fancy and strong feeling, sometimes even of diseased imaginations. Their legendary tales were therefore numerous, and sometimes highly impressive.⁷² They powerfully aided the cause of superstition, and may have contributed something to the growth of our narrative and romantic poetry. No saint was created without a competent addition of legends to his life.⁷³ But the progress of human nature has suffered by this practice. The biography of many of the worthy and superior persons, of both sexes, and of all conditions, who have earnestly professed the Roman Catholic religion, would have done honor to piety and virtue, and have promoted these qualities in others, if it had been simply and truly narrated; but, disfigured and falsified by the fictitious

⁷² The Histories of Bede and Mathew Paris may be read for specimens of the legends of the day. They are favorable specimens, because they are both honest writers, and meant to state the truth, as far as they knew or believed it. How much legends pervade the most superior Catholic minds, and how much they deform their true and earnest sense of religion, may be seen in the Meditations of saint Ignatius, which literally refer to many as unquestionable facts. But if we read Plutarch's Treatises, in what are called his Morals, we shall see, that this able and well informed Grecian believed so many legendary stories of the classical heroes and divinities, as to convince us that our forefathers are not chargeable with any augmentation of human credulity. It is quite a mistake to think that human improvement had gone back in the middle ages.

⁷³ How easy a legend is generated by those who wish to deceive or are willing to be deceived, we see by a passage in the famous Sobieski's letter to his wife on the day after his great victory over the Turks, at Vienna, in 1688, which he said had saved Christianity. 'The Reverend Capuchin Father Mark Ariano, who, whenever he meets me, presses me cordially to his bosom, assures me, that during the battle, he saw a WHITE DOVE hovering over our army.' What the Capuchin pretended to have seen, the conqueror reported to his wife as if he did not disbelieve it: she of course would repeat it to her court and people, with her additional credence; and they to each other, till no one would allow the flattering circumstance to be questioned. Thus Cicero repeats with no adverse feeling, the alleged appearance of Castor and Pollux, in a wing of the Roman army on one of its great battles. De Divin.

BOOK
VII.HISTORY
OF RELI-
GION IN
ENGLAND.


drapery and machinery with which they are accompanied, the lives of the saints are full of fabulous miracles, and praise many loathsome mortifications that lead to no virtues. The power assumed by the Pope, of creating saints, was one of the boldest invasions of the rights of the Supreme, and an actual superseding of that final judgment which has been announced impartially to all. The Pope's bull of canonization placed the dead individual, not only immediately in heaven, but in that high character in heaven; that to him mortal prayers were to be addressed, because he would procure from the Deity, for his suppliant, the favors he desired. It was therefore a species not only of beatification, but of an approach to deification—it was an arrogated power of creating a celestial nobility; and one of the most certain paths of attaining this proud distinction, was a zealous devotion to the interests of the papal see. Our Thomas à Becket had no other claim. Saint Dunstan, Saint Dominic, Saint Francis, and Saint Ignatius, had they any more? ⁷⁴

Images.

The use of images was universal in the papal church, and they were made with moveable eyes and features and limbs, so as to perform various gesticulations, as at present is occasionally seen in Spain, Portugal and Italy, which the multitude were taught to believe were the supernatural movements of the persons they represented — a barefaced imposture ;

⁷⁴ The Pope and his clergy might with some truth, as to their assumed power, adopt the inscription of the gate of Dante's *Inferno* :—

Per me si va nella città dolente :

Per me si va nell' eterno dolore :

Per me si va tra la perdita gente.—*Infern. Cant. 3.*

To those who were disobedient or rebellious to them, it was haughtily and sternly announced :—

Lasciate ogni speranza, Voi, che' entrate.

Ib.

and yet our ancestors were not less intellectual than the classical ages, for this deluded credulity.⁷⁵

Human policy never invented a more powerful engine for the arbitrary government of mankind,⁷⁶ than the doctrine of a purgatorial state. The final judgment of the human race had been declared by its Redeemer to be his prerogative and office; and therefore of this no sophistry could divest him. But an intermediate purgatory, being the fiction of the Catholic hierarchy, could be shaped and administered, diminished or extended, as the priesthood chose. The duration of this state was found to be as manageable as the language which expressed it, and was made to be entirely subservient to the will of the priest. It was he alone who pronounced, or could explore, whether the dying individual would have to endure a hundred, a thousand, or tens of thousand years of penal fire. It was the rites, machinery, and payments which he dictated, which had the talis-

CHAP.
I.

ORIGIN OF
THE ECCLESIASTICAL
SYSTEM IN
ENGLAND.

⁷⁵ The middle ages must not be depreciated on this account into any inferiority to the Greek and Romans of talents and cultivation, for even PLUTARCH says, 'For my part I am apt to believe, that the offerings made in this city, of statues and consecrated presents sympathize with Divine Providence, and move themselves jointly to foretel and signify future events; and that no part of these sacred donatives is void of sense; but that every part is full of the Deity.' Plut. Morals. 'Why the Pythian Priestess,' &c. v. 3. p. 95. This is one of numerous indications that the middle ages, with all their superstitions, were no retrogradation of the human mind.

⁷⁶ It has been supposed that this doctrine originated from the Pagan theory, of the purification of departed souls by fire. Mosheim's Ecc. Hist. Cent. 5. vol. 2. p. 40. But the Catholics refer its scriptural foundation to a passage in the Maccabees, one of the valuable but uninspired books of the Apocrypha. The words there, as translated by Dr. Milner, are, 'It is therefore a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from their sins.' b. 2. c. 12. v. 45. But this is merely an individual recommendation of the writer, and no divine precept or revelation. As a matter of feeling, kindness and fancy, we may be induced to pray for the happiness of departed friends, or to solicit it for all; this is natural, charitable and harmless; but to suppose that our prayers produce a certain and specific benefit to them;—it is here that the delusion, I had almost said the impiety, begins.

BOOK
VII.HISTORY
OF RELI-
GION IN
ENGLAND.

manic power of abridging or determining the appointed portion. Wherever this doctrine was believed, the priest had the mind of his votary bound in an adamant chain. To have any prospect of comfort after death, it was necessary that the priest and church should be propitiated. This at last became so well understood, and so completely organized, that some monasteries and churches had their settled tables of necessary offices and pecuniary payments, each of which was potent enough to resist a certain portion of the purgatorial pains.⁷⁷ To every mass for the dead, a power of abolishing a determinate number of days or years of this probationary fire was allotted, and these masses were to be purchased by proportionate liberalities. The rich and great had therefore always the power of making the first æras of the next world as pleasant to them as the present. The poor were less secure; and their absolute obedience and servile ductility were the only means by which they could procure safety. This was one of the causes of the rich donations to monasteries and churches, which made the Catholic foundations so affluent and powerful.⁷⁸

⁷⁷ We have an instance how particular monasteries endeavored to attract popularity from this source, in the fragment published by Hearne:—“Here begynneth the pardon of the monastery of Shene, which is Syen: First, every day in the ere, hosumever cometh to the saide monastery devoutly gevyng sumwhat to the reparacions of the saide monastery, and say five pater noster, and five aves, and a crede, shall have CCCCC daies of pardon—and alsoo, hosumever saith devoutly our lady’s sauter in the saide monastery, shall have CCCCC days of pardonne. Hearne’s Fordun, p. 1399. The subject of indulgencies is more fully treated of in the third volume of our Modern History of England.

⁷⁸ Lady Clare, who died 1360, leaves 140*l.* to sing masses for the souls of her three husbands, herself, and servants. She also bequeaths 100 marcs, to find five men at arms to serve in the Holy Land, for her husband’s soul and her own. Royal and Noble Wills, 29. So the earl of Hereford, who died 1361, bequeaths 300 marcs of silver, to sing masses for his soul. *Ib.* p. 46. The Royal and Noble Wills, published by Mr. Nicholls, abound with legacies of plate, jewels, rich clothes, furniture

CHAP.
..I.ORIGIN OF
THE ECCLE-
SIASTICAL
SYSTEM IN
ENGLAND.

We may smile with the contempt of superiority, to behold our forefathers trembling at fictions of their fancy, and to find the proudest and the most turbulent of human beings eagerly lavishing their wealth to adorn churches, found monasteries, and to have masses sung for ages after they were in the tomb, with the hope of shortening their residence in this imaginary state. But let us in justice to them recollect, that tho they erred in applying it, yet the principle of their belief was right; and consonant with the conduct of human reason, in every age and in every region of its existence. The unknown future has every where been contemplated with awe, and nothing can erase the feeling from the human heart, but the theory—that there will be none—that we are but like the beasts that perish—and that when we quit the life of this world, we cease to be for ever. But altho this supposition—as gratuitous at least, and, as to any authority for it, as arbitrary a fiction, as the tortures of Ixion or the fire of purgatory—has been adorned with all the high colouring of poetry, and all the arguments of misdirected ingenuity; yet it is too revolting to our best reasoned hopes, too contradictory to the unceasing improvability of our intellectual principles, too irreconcilable with the general wisdom and goodness visible in creation, too unconsolatory, too unpalatable, and too brutalizing in its tendency, to gain an extensive or a lasting settlement in the human mind.⁷⁹ But if we shall survive the present state, who

and money, given by great personages to ecclesiastical persons and places. The Black Prince bequeathed the great table of gold, already noticed in this History; see before, vol. 2. p. 227.

⁷⁹ If a Lucretius were to station himself on the shore of a dark and boundless sea on which all mankind must venture, and, while they were anxiously seeking some safe vessel to sail in, some cautious pilots to guide them, or some information on the nature and consequences of the mys-

BOOK
VII.HISTORY
OF RELI-
GION IN
ENGLAND.

can be responsible to us for what our next existence may experience? Hence, it was not in their anxiety for their destiny after death, that our ancestors erred, for he only is reasonable who has a rational solicitude about it; but it was in their supposing that a priest or a pope had any influence over it, that our pious forefathers deluded their own good sense, and trembled before phantoms of unauthorized imagination, of gratuitous supposition, created by beings as impotent and as ignorant as themselves. We may read Dante, to feast on the terrible beauties of his sublime and pathetic fancy; but if we should be so absurd as to mistake the poet for an apostle, we degrade our understanding, and wilfully torment ourselves with chimeras of our own painting.⁸⁰ Our ancestors believed what they were told, because they had neither books enough, nor sufficient accumulated knowledge, nor proper instructors, to enable them to judge accurately of the pretensions of their clergy, or of the foundations of their doctrines. But when the means of judgment occurred, no nation more eagerly studied, or more resolutely and temperately applied them. They broke the bandages of their superstitions, the first moment that they were truly qualified to do so; and they

terious passage, should employ himself in urging them to plunge boldly in and perish, because he was sure that they must all be drowned for ever, and therefore that all thought and caution were useless; in what light, considering his utter ignorance on the subject, the evils that, notwithstanding his assertions, may occur to us, and the impossibility of his giving us any security against them—in what light should we consider him! But Lucretius himself has given us the result of his experiment, how far his system promotes the happiness of human life. He who extolled Epicurus for making us so happy by extinguishing all belief of a futurity, found himself so miserable, notwithstanding the boasted anodyne, as to destroy himself by suicide, before he was 40.

⁸⁰ Dante, in his 'Purgatorio,' has presented this Catholic tenet in its least obnoxious shape, and combined with much fine poetry and sweet versification.

devoted themselves with benevolent zeal, to communicate to others the illumination which they had attained.⁸¹

Our ancestors of the middle ages therefore claim from us the equity of our recollection, that altho they suffered themselves to be misled by their trusted teachers as to the best means of securing happiness to be the companion of their state after death, yet that they evidenced the highest wisdom in their desire to insure it. They may fairly compete with the present age for a superiority of judgment and sagacity in this momentous concern, because it is wiser to be anxious than to be indifferent about it. To believe that a purchased copy of a pope's indulgence would save them from pains and sufferings hereafter, was not greater credulity than to believe that there will be none. The sceptic is not more rational than the bigot in his opinions ; but is inferior to him in the common sense and natural feeling of his deductions and conduct. No theory has been promulged more hypothetical and gratuitous, however patronized, than the supposition that the man always thinking and feeling now, will neither think nor feel after death. It has never had the least foundation from authority : no evidence from the next world has come to sanction it. All nations have cherished a contrary belief. It rests only on some arguments which have been repeatedly controverted ; and, wherever it prevails, it exists with the singular anomaly, that any reasonable beings should desire such a personal destruction to be true. The

CHAP.
I.

ORIGIN OF
THE ECCLESIASTICAL
SYSTEM IN
ENGLAND.

⁸¹ I cannot read St. Ignatius without feeling from how much mental slavery we have been released, by the decrease of the ancient notion of purgatory. He seriously tells his readers, that one female ghost declared she was in purgatory because she washed her head on a Friday ; and another, that she was doomed to it for eighteen days, because she had listened to the songs sung under her windows. *Medit.* p. 230.

BOOK
VII.HISTORY
OF RELI-
GION IN
ENGLAND.

middle ages, if they could be embodied before us, would retort our depreciation of their understandings by a justifiable sarcasm on our own; they credited the fictions of their hierarchy, and we have those of our superseding philosophists; the one supposed a purgatory; the other, welcome annihilation. Both these are improbabilities, but the latter is the most unlikely of the two—and the adoption of it as a certainty may be fairly deemed not the least irrational and prejudicial.

When we consider the immense addition which was made to the happiness of mankind, wherever the Christian system and its scriptures were introduced, by their positive and unequivocal assurance that a kingdom of bliss and glory would be the awarded enjoyment, after the death of the present life, to all whose conduct and faith here should obtain it, we cannot but regret to see how the promised blessing was mutilated, intercepted and nullified by the legendary dreams, the official contrivances and the mercenary falsehoods of the monks, friars, and many of the priesthood of the papal church, and afterwards of the jesuits, until the diffused Reformation released half of Europe from the puerile intimidations. Instead of expanding the animating prospects disclosed by our great Teacher, into those sublime views and hopes and consecrated poetry to which they naturally lead the grateful and intelligent reason, the perverting dictators chiefly sought to alarm and torture the human mind, and agitate the believing heart with the distorted fictions of their purgatory and demons, and with tales of torment and horrors, in order that society might be subjected to their sway; and be induced to purchase their invented means of future

ease and preservation. For this purpose, their writings and sermons and confessionals made almost all the common actions, customs and manners of the laity, even the most petty and harmless circumstances of daily life, sins and crimes, for which ages of suffering in purgatory or everlasting damnation in the more dreadful regions of futurity would be incurred, unless the preventive inventions of the papal church were resorted to ; which were always made matters of pecuniary acquisition or remuneratory barter. By this conduct they divested all classes of the peculiar comfort and felicity which the generous and gratuitous mercy and promises of the benign Redeemer poured so beneficently upon human existence ; giving earthly life a new charm, and to every sorrow and evil the only lasting alleviation that can avail. The Mahomedan clergy were, in this respect, far more disinterested ; they have never sought to terrify, to govern, or to profit by such interested methods ; they have never pretended to have the future world at their disposal ; nor have devised any rites or schemes to command its allotment. It is a pity that the papal hierarchy in the middle ages were not as rational, as unambitious, as unpretentious, and as moderate.

The practice of confession, and the power of priestly absolution, were efficacious instruments of human government, and, perhaps, in many cases useful auxiliaries to human virtue in that age, tho delicacy, sensibility and reason shrink from them now. The minuteness of the examination, and the continual recollection of polluting vices, were not favorable to virtue, in either priest or penitent ; and as absolution was granted on contrition and penance, and not refused when again solicited, it has always tended to

CHAP.

I.

ORIGIN OF
THE ECCLESIASTICAL
SYSTEM IN
ENGLAND.

Confession
and abso-
lution.

BOOK
VII.HISTORY
OF RELI-
GION IN
ENGLAND.

lead the conscience to seek its repose and safety in the sacerdotal ceremony, and to make ritual religion the satisfactory substitute for moral rectitude, and the heart's sincere piety. Other evils also occur from the practice of circumstantial confession. It subjects human happiness, and even virtue, to the caprice and humor and contradictory opinions of spiritual directors, who neither agree with each other, nor sometimes with themselves.⁸² It likewise introduces inconveniences and perils still more formidable. When once the priest became master of the secret vices of an individual family, he had that family entirely under his command; and tho the dread of being so situated may have kept many moral, it also keeps society too enslaved. Disclosure of the secrets of confession was indeed forbidden under severe penalties; but, independently of the power of appointing the adapted penance, and of giving or withholding the coveted absolution, the means of alarm and injury which the knowledge of actions involving often life, property and reputation, inevitably gave to the priest, even without betraying his trust; and the personal

⁸² The pious Gertrude More, tho as devout a Catholic as her ancestor sir Thomas More, acknowledges some of the evils, and inutility and slavery of the system of confession. 'Wo be to those, that have no other confidence in God at their death, but so far as they are warranted by their confessor. For to-day I have a confessor which will warrant me; and to-morrow another, who will doubt of my case. To-day I have one so precise, that he will warrant me in nothing; and to-morrow one, who thinketh he can pierce so far into all things, that if I will adhere to him, and nobody else, he will answer for all.—We place our peace upon that which is as changeable as the moon; to wit, the humors and opinions of men in indifferent things. I have had myself a confessor, who, tho he had the largest conscience that ever I knew a good man have in my life in what he pleased, yet, out of the difficulty he had with me in his nature, and out of his aptness thereby to take all I did and said in another sense than I meant it, he could and did turn twenty things, which my other confessors made no great matter of, into horrible mortal sins.—What was I to do in this case? I had been warranted by three former confessors, two of which were my chief superiors and doctors of divinity; and now this one wholly doubted my case.'—Confession, p. 54, 55.

shame at the consciousness of his knowlege; were abundantly sufficient to subject the sinner submissively to his control. The importance of the possession of this source of influence and government was so well understood among the Romish clergy, that it was one of the first privileges eargerly desired and obtained by the mendicant orders, and most fiercely contended for by the parochial clergy, from whom they took it.⁸³ Yet even these obnoxious customs may have been important to the moral government of the fierce, powerful, and untutored savage of the middle ages. When every baron was a petty sovereign, absolute in his own domain, governing by his lance and sword, and commanding a servile population as magisterially, and often as sternly, as West-India or American slave-owners their unfortunate property; what could train him to any tolerable observance of moral order or duties, but this sovereignty of his priests, as absolute and as domineering as his own. While he was in health, he despised and oppressed them. It was often not till he began to shake in the ague, or to groan in the fever, or became helpless in the palsy, that he admitted them to influence him; and as he had no more cultivated reason than they had, or more intelligent agency, he could be only governed by the strong and palpable machinery to which they subjected him. The servility of the world, and the gain thence resulting to the clergy, led them to abuse their power by trafficking with indulgences beforehand; thus enabling the rich to buy impunity anterior to their sin, and

CHAP.
I.

ORIGIN OF
THE ECCLE-
SIASTICAL
SYSTEM IN
ENGLAND.

⁸³ See Matt. Paris, pp. 419. 611, 612. 693 & 694. It was at the fourth Council of Lateran, in 1215, that the famous canon supporting the domestic clergy was made, which commanded that all who had arrived to years of discretion should confess their sins at least once a year, to *their own proper priest*, and receive the eucharist at least every Easter.—A. Butler, v. 8. p. 83.

BOOK
VII.HISTORY
OF RELI-
GION IN
ENGLAND.

tempting them to vice by the anticipating pardon. Reason, once awakened, was not long insensible to this abuse ; and this, like all the other superstitions of the Romish clergy, perished from its own folly.⁸⁴ Altho indulgences were so abundantly granted in Europe during the middle ages, and documents enough exist to prove that they were given to operate on the pains for sin in the eternal world, and tho they were then notoriously purchased, and made and distributed to be so, yet so sensible has the Catholic mind become of their impropriety, that one of their ablest doctors amongst us, and he is very able, very eloquent, and very acute, denounces such traffic as criminal,⁸⁵ and wishes to persuade himself and his readers, that indulgences mean only, the remission of the temporal punishments of sin.⁸⁶ They may have this construction now, but he would have been decreed and persecuted as an heretic, not less satanic than Luther himself, if he had maintained that they implied no more in those days, when the founder of modern Protestantism raised his intrepid voice against their impiety and unbelief.

⁸⁴ We have an instance of this recorded by a monkish chronicler of Richard II. When the duke of Lancaster went to Spain, the Pope, as he deemed the Spaniards 'schismatici,' because not friendly to him, gave the pardon of sins to all who would accompany Lancaster. The monk adds, 'But this frequent pardon and granting of indulgences had become so vile and despicable, *'viluit et sordebat,'* among the people, that there were few who adopted this crusade.' Monk of Evesham, p. 70.

⁸⁵ Dr. Milner declares, 'We hold, that it would be a sacrilegious crime in any person whomsoever to be concerned in buying or selling them.' End. p. 28.

⁸⁶ This ingenious controversialist says, 'An indulgence, according to the doctrine of the Catholic church, is not and does not include the pardon of any sin at all, little or great, past, present or to come, or the eternal punishment due to it.

'Hence, if the pardon of sin is mentioned in any indulgence, this means nothing more than the remission of the temporal punishments annexed to it.' Milner, p. 97.

That the sacramental bread and wine became, after the consecrating words of the priest, the actual flesh and blood of our Saviour, was in the eleventh century the belief of the great majority of the European clergy; and that the Pope, in then fixing it in the Catholic creed, acted in conformity with the wishes of the majority of the clergy at that period, cannot be fairly disputed. But that it was not the indispensable belief of the Christian world before this æra, but had been repeatedly contested, and without exciting any official hostility before, is equally clear. In the eleventh century, Berengarius excited a serious controversy about it; in which he was overpowered as much by his sacerdotal brethren, as by the papal authority. If we ask, why the clergy at that time, when knowledge began to dawn, should so zealously have struck down the emerging advocates of common sense on this subject? we must refer it to that interior feeling of its important consequences, which one of the Popes so unguardedly expressed, when he declared, that it was execrable, that a priest, who by his ministration could create the Creator of all things, should do homage to kings.⁸⁷ In the same spirit, and without seeing its inconsistency with the above sentiment, Pope Paschal said, it was monstrous that man should create God; and therefore, as priests were called gods in scripture,⁸⁸ they were not to be invested by sovereigns. The inference was irresistible. If the clergy were indeed possessed of the power of creating the very Deity whom they worshipped, they became by their office a supernatural order of men. They could

CHAP.
I.

ORIGIN OF
THE ECCLE-
SIASTICAL
SYSTEM IN
ENGLAND.
Transub-
stantiation

⁸⁷ Eadmer, p. 53.

⁸⁸ See the Pope's letter to Henry, in Eadmer, p. 61.

BOOK
VII.HISTORY
OF RELI-
GION IN
ENGLAND.

do that, of which angels were incapable.⁸⁹ They were indeed workers of miracles; and Becket became reasonable in treating them as if they were angels or divine personages, whenever they came before him.⁹⁰ It will be, however, but an act of justice to their motives and memory to add, that a strong feeling of some sacred mystery having been attached by our Saviour to the solemn rite, actuated many to adopt the opinion of their church with the most disinterested sincerity. The emphatic passage which relates to it in St. John, c. 6. v. 53-8, combined with the appointing

⁸⁹ So the Pope remarked, 'quod nulli Angelorum concessum est.' Eadmer, p. 53. It is observable now at the Catholic high mass, what reverences and respect are paid by the other priests to the priest who performs the chief ceremony. He is repeatedly bowed to, and the lappet of his vestment twice held up; and he is also incensed by them, apparently on account of the miracle which he is supposed to be producing.

⁹⁰ In the *Magnum Chronicon Belgicum*, there is an amusing instance of the extent to which this doctrine was carried, and of the credulity with which the most absurd stories concerning it were received and recorded. In 1306, a woman of Paris pledged her best gown with a Jew. When Easter-day drew near, she wished to be as fine as her neighbors, and, as she could not redeem the gown, she earnestly entreated him to lend it to her till the Monday, promising to pay double interest for the favor: he refused, unless she swore to him to bring the host to him, which she would that day receive from the priest. At first she refused to do a thing so horrible; but her vanity overcoming every other consideration, she agreed to keep the host in her mouth unswallowed, and to deliver it to him. She had her gown, and brought the consecrated wafer. The Jew eagerly seized it, and exclaiming, 'Art thou the God of the Christians? art thou he whom their mad credulity believes to have been born of the Virgin? If thou art he whom my fathers crucified, I will boil thee!' and he threw it into a vessel of boiling water. Immediately a beautiful boy appeared in it! The Jew, instead of being converted by the miracle, seized a fork, and tried to keep him under the water. But when he thought he had him in the middle, the figure was at the side; and thus whenever the Jew struck at him in one place, he always saw him in another. The Jew and the figure thus kept struggling with each other till his children heard the bustle, and came to see what it was. Frightened, they ran into the street to tell the wonder. The people eagerly came in, and saw the Jew still carrying on the conflict. The bishop of Paris, and all the clergy, then followed, and found the host still in the boiling water. They released it out of the hands of this inexorable Jew, and carried it in procession to the church of St. John de Gravia at Paris, 'where it is kept to this day,' says my fully believing author. *Mag. Chron. Belg.* p. 268. ed. Pistori.

words at the last supper, make it in the natural force of the terms, far more than an historical or commemorating ceremony. They gave it a connexion with faith, hope, affection, adoration and divine communion, which made the Catholic not unwilling to adopt the most literal construction and super-added paraphrase of the original expressions, which his church for its own political purposes determined to uphold, rather than to agree with its opponents, that it was not more sacred or particular than any other of their usual rites. The perception that this was wrong, and the want of any authorized middle path, like that of the church of England, on this interesting subject, kept many in the middle ages, and since, attached to the doctrine of Transubstantiation, who would not otherwise have supported it.

CHAP.
I.
—
ORIGIN OF
THE ECCLE-
SIASTICAL
SYSTEM IN
ENGLAND
—

The power of excommunication and interdict was one of the most subtle in its device, the most penal in its operation, the most tyrannical in its principle, and the greatest tax on the credulity of mankind, that political ambition has invented. The curses that were often attached to them, are too loathsome to repeat. Happily they became so frequently misused, as to rouse the indignation and contempt of mankind; and, altho they may still subsist in name, they are sinking fast into oblivion, from the abhorrence and ridicule of every feeling and reasoning individual.⁹¹

Interdict.

Whoever has attended the ceremonies of worship of the Catholic church, must have been struck with

⁹¹ And yet the political spirit of the papacy is not, and perhaps never can be, extinct. It certainly materially affected Europe after the Roman conquest. Dr. Milner admits, that 'It is undeniable, that different Popes, in former ages, have pronounced sentence of deposition against certain contemporary princes, and that great numbers of theologians have held, tho not as a matter of faith, that they had a right to do so.' End. Relig. Controv. p. 131.

what a protestant eye considers to be its unmeaning mummerly and theatrical gesticulations. So many little circumstances, actions, and changes are to be performed in the high mass, that three priests are necessary for its due celebration. About or above forty bodily movements have to be made, of which Picart has published prints,⁹² and which it requires an elaborate education to learn. But in justice to the reputation and intellect of this ancient hierarchy, it may be remarked, that these technical formalities are not supposed nor intended to be the puerile or senseless gestures which they appear. They are mostly, if not all, symbolical of some event, some feeling, some idea, or some effective agency. They are dramatic allegories of the piety, pious history or assumed pious operations of the priest or the votary, and were and still are inculcated to be so. Thus, on Palm Sunday it was the custom that branches of palm should be blessed, distributed to the devout, and carried by them in solemn procession, and be held in their hands while St. Matthew's history of the passion was reading. But this was to represent our Saviour's triumphal entry into Jerusalem, and our participation of its resulting benefits.⁹³ The solemn office called *Tenebræ*, performed on the evenings of the Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday of Passion week, and so named because all the candles are gradually extinguished during the course of it, until it ends in total darkness, is a series of scenic representations of the awful and affecting incidents which occurred at that season.

⁹² See his volume on the religious ceremonies of the world.

⁹³ I take this from the Preface to the Catholic publication of 'The Office of the Holy Week, according to the Roman Missal and Breviary,' p. vi. The analogous explications of Alcuin may be read in the Bib. Pali. v. 10. p. 245; of Amalarius, ib. p. 322; and of Rabanus, p. 603.

The usual psalms, hymns, lessons, collects and prayers are laid aside. "There is no solemn invocation of God's assistance at the beginning of the matins and lauds. No gloria patria at the end of the psalms, and no hymns of divine praise are sung. No blessing is asked by the reader of the lessons; no little chapters are read by the priest for the instruction of the people; no Dominus vobiscum, to bless the faithful; no oremus, to desire their occurrence; no amen, to express their consent."⁸⁴ If we ask, what is meant; what is expressed by these abstractions from the ordinary service of their church? the answer is—"by all these omissions the church declares her concern, trouble and confusion for her expiring Lord; and the psalms and lessons that make up this office, scarcely breathe any thing else but sighs and lamentations for the sufferings, death and burial of the Redeemer."⁸⁵

CHAP.
I.

ORIGIN OF
THE ECCLES-
IASTICAL
SYSTEM IN
ENGLAND.

It is impossible but that the sympathies of every honorable bosom should venerate the motives and aim even of this metaphorical devotion, tho the taste may differ as to its figurative applicability.⁸⁶ But with all our respect for the sincere emotions of the good heart and their sacred object, we cannot but think the additional ceremonies of this period to be

⁸⁴ Office of the Holy Week, ib. With this statement, the ancient account of Micrologus corresponds, 10 Bib. Pat. p. 761; and see Gemma Animæ, ib. 1270.

⁸⁵ On the rites of the Roman church, and all their alleged mysteries, reasons and objects, the most authentic information may be obtained from the 10th volume of the Magna Bibliotheca Patrum, which contains the 'Ordo Romanus Isidore de Ecclesiasticis Officiis, Alcuin, Rupert, Amalarius, and Honorius de Officiis Divines;' Peter Abbot of Clugny, Hildebert, Hugh St. Victor, and Berno, on the Mysteries and Office of the Mass, and other treatises on analogous subjects.

⁸⁶ That even the dresses of the Catholic priesthood are meant to be symbolical may be learnt from Ivo Carnotensis de Reb. Eccl. in the Bib. Pat. v. 10. p. 781, and Rupert de Div. Offic. ib. p. 861. So the Gemma Animæ allegorises almost every thing in the Romish hierarchy. ib. p. 1179-1334.

BOOK
VII.HISTORY
OF RELI-
GION IN
ENGLAND.

forced and bad allegories, and to tend rather to disgust and revolt the thinking mind, than to excite the grateful recollections which they were deemed to cherish. If allegory be not very expressive, and very judicious, it always offends, tho embodied in the finest imaginations, and sung with the richest harmonies of the muse; but when represented by action and gestures, it is commonly a pantomime that caricatures, and far more certainly awakes a depreciating criticism than a befriending sensibility.⁹⁷ Yet for this, let us not visit the papal church with any imputation of peculiar fatuity. Wherever we turn our eyes, whether on Egypt, the prolific mother of all mental allegorizations; on ancient Babylon; on the Magian rites of its conquerors; on the elegant, tasteful, capricious and unprincipled Greece; on the venerated Eleusinian mysteries; on the sterner minds of republican Rome; on the fierce votaries of Odin; on the Guebre; the Brahmin, or the rudest African; still in every country symbolical rites, with the most arbitrary, wild and unreasonable applications, every where

⁹⁷ A specimen of what the text alludes to may be quoted from the 'Office of the Holy Week.'—'The six candles on the altar, and the fifteen placed on the epistle side, all burning at the beginning of the office, signify the light of truth preached by the profits and Jesus Christ, of which the fundamental article is the mystery represented by the triangular candlestick. At the repetition of the fourteen antiphors in the matins and lauds, fourteen of the candles in this are extinguished; and at the last six verses of the benedicts, those on the altar are put out, to teach us that the Jews were totally deprived of the light of faith when they put our Saviour to death. But the 15th candle, representing the light of the world, is only hidden for a time under the altar, and afterwards brought out again still burning, to signify, that altho Christ died according to his humanity, and was laid in the sepulchre, yet he was always alive in his divinity, by which he raised his body again to life. The darkness of the church, while the miserere and prayer are said, naturally put us in mind of the darkness that covered the whole earth at his death; and the noise made at the end of the prayer, represents the confusion of nature for the suffering of its Author, when the earth trembled, the rocks rent, the graves opened, and the veil of the temple was torn from the top to the bottom.' *Offic.* p. vi. vii.

appear, kindling our surprise at their popularity, and dissatisfying our judgment. Yet, with all their palpable defects and manifold perversions, there must have been something in the human mind of former ages, which made this mode of conveying instruction, or of interesting the feelings, not only serviceable, but indispensable; or symbolical ceremonies and allegorical compositions could not have been so universal and durable. They were even found necessary to the ancient Jews, and for the tuition of us their religious posterity;⁸⁰ and so fondly have mankind clung to their use, that altho our Saviour abolished all but two simple ceremonies, and his Apostles inculcated no other, yet both the Grecian and Roman churches have zealously adopted and adapted many from the paganisms they overthrew, and have multiplied their number by subsequent inventions and imitations, till they have created one of the most artificial mechanisms of human worship, to which the world has, in any age or country, bowed its neck, or surrendered its reason, its freedom, and its happiness. The Vaudois, in the twelfth century, began to decry the burthening yoke, and Wicliffe, in the fourteenth, to loosen it from England. But its destruction, both here and in Europe, must be mainly attributed to Luther, who has not only taught Protestants to exchange it for their Redeemer's precept, "Take my yoke upon you, and LEARN OF ME," but has even

CHAP.
I.
ORIGIN OF
THE ECCLESIASTICAL
SYSTEM IN
ENGLAND.

⁸⁰ The strict applicability and impressive force of the Jewish ceremonies appointed by the Pentateuch, will be more strikingly felt, as we compare them with the puerile figments and absurd subtleties of the Talmud and the Rabbis, and even with the fantastic refinements of the ancient Christian theologians. But the pageants of the public festivals, as well as the fine, tho wearying poem of our Spenser, the pictures of many painters, and the books of our alchymists, prove that all classes had, and liked the allegorizing mania.

BOOK
VII.HISTORY
OF RELI-
GION IN
ENGLAND.

lessened the sacerdotal bondage over Catholics themselves.

But altho the popular religion, as taught and practised in the middle ages, was full of those gross superstitions which make the unbeliever believe his infidelity to be his virtue; yet it must be allowed, that they were chosen by voluntary preference, and without any necessity, by all who either inculcated or adopted them. The doctrine of the Catholic church and of the stream of the mighty minds which have upheld it, have been full of better things, and was always presenting better things to the contemplation and use both of themselves and of the public. If Calixtus II. wrote a book to recommend the shrine and fabled body of St. James of Compostella, yet this same Pope, in the same work, also urged these highly spiritual feelings, unconnected with either saints or legends. "By the love of Christ, man is approximated to God, and human things are united with heavenly. O, how precious and even glorious; brethren, it is to love our Redeemer,—to love him whom the Father loves! As the affection of the bridegroom to his bride, so does the love of our Father benignly blend us with him in his Son. For when we attach ourselves to him with a dignified regard, we become associated with God. By the sin of the first man we became alienated from the Deity; but by love to our Saviour, we are reunited with it. As long as our affection continues to our Lord, so long the Divine Father is with us, and we with him."⁹⁹ The most celebrated works of the Catholic doctors abound with the purest sentiments of affectionate piety. Thomas à Kempis is but one amid a numerous society of con-

⁹⁹ Sermones Jacob. 20 Maxim. Bib. Pat. p. 1293.

genial minds, among which none more clearly shew the good that was taught, or will more gratify the spirit that loves and cultivates the higher degrees of devout feeling, than the little volume on the union of the mind with the Deity, by the celebrated Franciscan and philosopher Albertus Magnus.¹⁰⁰ If, then, the world in the middle ages chose the debasing and the fantastic instead of the true, the sympathetic, the pious, the holy and the reasonable, it was the wilful and self-degrading selection of their own bad taste, corrupt feeling, and deteriorating habits. The better and the wiser were always before them, and they sank down to folly, debility and bondage, and drew their teachers after them, as the swine prefers its dunghill, and the crow its carrion carcass.

Nothing can more satisfactorily prove this to our conviction, than that book on which our countrymen, in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, wrote more commentaries than on any other works, except those of Aristotle,—I mean the Sentences of Peter Lombard.¹⁰¹ This is and was meant to be an epitome of

CHAP.

I.

ORIGIN OF
THE ECCLE-
SIASTICAL
SYSTEM IN
ENGLAND.

¹⁰⁰ The edition I have is an Italian translation from the original Latin, and was printed at Rome, October 1525. There is nothing in it but what a Protestant might have written.

¹⁰¹ He died in 1164. The object which he accomplished was to give the whole doctrine of Christianity in a concise form, with illustrating quotations from the principal fathers.

It was commented upon, in this country, by the following persons, among very many others:—

Adamus, 1170.
Brixius, 1222.
Castriconens, 1270.
Borstal, 1290.
Blunt, 1296.
Beverley, 1294.
Brinkelaces, 1310.
Acton, 1320.
Adam Hibern. 1320.
Buckingham, 1324.
Alienantius, 1340.

Cardinalis, 1325.
Catton, 1343.
Bedeucus, 1380.
Bewfu, 1390.
Bokingham, 1398.
Boteler, 1401.
N. Cantolupe, 1441.
Barningham, 1448.
J. Capgrave, 1464.
J. Canon, 1482.
Beeth, 1498.

BOOK
VII.HISTORY
OF RELI-
GION IN
ENGLAND.

popular divinity. It discusses some of those useless and puerile points which the schoolmen were as fond of agitating as schoolboys of blowing their saponaceous bubbles. But the great body of its instruction is reasonable, sincere and moral Christianity, without any of the tinsel, corruptions, falsehoods and superstitions, which brought the papal hierarchy into irretrievable disgrace, as our country became enlightened. A succinct account of it will be given in the note at the end of the chapter, in order that it may be seen and felt, that as this book was one of the great and authorized and recommended foundations of the Christian education of every academical student, and was highly prized among ourselves, it was in the power of all to have trained their minds to a more intelligent profession of Christianity, than the multitude of all classes decided to prefer and would only pursue. In adding superstition to superstition, and trick to trick, I believe the Catholic hierarchy has often acted like our licentious poets, novelists and critics, who have made the immediate applause and profit of the day, their governing principle. They lowered their compositions to the depraved taste of those whom they sought to interest and influence. The corruption of all the religions that have appeared has arisen from this cause. Mankind will not generally patronize the wise, the moral, and the restraining; and the priesthood, rather than lose their power or their emolument, have too often submitted to be governed instead of governing; and to please by identifying their tuition with the humors and appetites, which, if not then gratified, might have revolted from their preceptors.¹⁰² Thus both the clergy and laity of

¹⁰² This tendency in many of his contemporaries, Peter Lombard him-

the middle ages became reciprocally the corrupting and the corrupted. It seems strange to say, but every age has shewn, that the human taste has no objection to absurdity, either for religion or against it. Any thing is by many preferred to it, and any thing can be associated with it; and every thing, however adverse, will be adopted to discredit or disguise it, rather than to cultivate that meek and lowly heart, that disinterested and unambitious temper, that active philanthropy, that enlightened docility, that sacred and undeviating faith, that noble confidence in its Divine Master, that cheerful resignation, that obedient fidelity, and that affectionate veneration, which, when harmoniously combined and habitually naturalised within us, constitute the true sublime and beautiful of the human soul and character. But all this requires a continuing self-government, a firmness of purpose, and a patient perseverance of life, for which all classes and ages have found it more agreeable to substitute, either technical credulity, or a contemptuous incredulity; the legend or the objection; the most enslaving submission, or the most absolute hostility; nor will this contrasted tragi-comedy now end till human nature expires. Hence, tho Peter Lombard's valued book taught a better system, a worse crept into practice. He, however, did not teach, and was not studied in vain; his work was a favorite in England, and contributed both to form the mind of Wicliffe,¹⁶³ and to

CHAP.
I.ORIGIN OF
THE ECCLESIASTICAL
SYSTEM IN
ENGLAND.

self saw, and thus complained of:—'Who labor to adapt the words of wisdom to the things they dream; not following the true, but the pleasing; whose evil will does not incite to the understanding of the truth, but to the defence of what is agreeable; not desiring the truth to be taught, but turning the ear from that to fables; whose profession is to search out more what will please than what will instruct. Not desiring what ought to be taught, they adapt their doctrines to what is desired, and hold the subject of wisdom in superstition.' Sentent. Prolog. p. 2.

¹⁶³ He quotes Lombard in his Trialogus.

BOOK
VII.HISTORY
OF RELI-
GION IN
ENGLAND.

dispose the English intellect to that purer system of faith and worship, which our most acute Reformer so resolutely advocated.

The battle tenet of predestination was strongly pressed forward to public notice in the latter part of the middle ages by the treatise of Bradwardine; but it did not then make more impression than any other of the questions of speculative theology; altho afterwards, under other circumstances, and especially when united with worldly politics, it produced the most discreditable agitations. As it will matter little to any one that shall be ultimately saved, whether he was predestinated to be so or not; it seems more rational to be attentive now to the means and conditions of the salvation, than to the chronology of the appointment,—especially as the belief of our individual predestination is likely to be as often the victory of self-love over reason as of any better agency. Of as little importance seems the connected dispute about the divine foresight and man's free will. That I possess free will, is a fact of which I am daily conscious. That omniscience and foresight are attributes and prerogatives of the Deity, is equally a truth which from personal experience I cannot know, but which we learn and believe from both philosophy and revelation. On what occasions, or to what degree, he chooses to exert either, I have not been told, and am unable to discern. But being certain of my own free will, from my continual use of it, I feel it to be a mere question of argumentative curiosity, which it is neither necessary nor possible for me to decide, within what modifications the Creator has determined to exercise or limit his divine prescience, in order that I may have a free will to choose between good and evil; and

sufficient free agency to act spontaneously on my election. Both of these he requires me to exert, and on both I am habitually acting. These are the essential facts for my knowledge and guidance; and all debate about their accordance with the Divine qualities is mere curiosity, pugilistic controversy on topics, which no one, from the want of ampler materials of judgment, can at present satisfactorily elucidate.

CHAP.
I.
—
ORIGIN OF
THE ECCLESIASTICAL
SYSTEM IN
ENGLAND.
—

In the middle ages, FAITH appears to have been always deemed indispensable to a Christian. The great topic of one branch of our religious professors, its justifying effects, was then little adverted to; nor perhaps was the inattention to it any serious injury. It is for us anxiously to inquire what the Deity has made the means or conditions of our salvation, and these we find to be both faith and holiness; neither will do alone, and neither perhaps can truly subsist without the other. But it does not seem useful to us to debate, and scarcely duly reverential, what it is that leads the Divine mind to justify, pardon or save us. The motives and principles of His decision on this, as on all subjects, remain within Himself; and it looks like a presumptuous effort of the human mind, to dispute or dogmatise arrogantly or intemperately about it. Let us take care of the personal effect, with every gratitude for the benefaction; but leave to Him the producing cause, and His determining motive.

It is a favorite topic with many to satirise our ancestors for their credulity, and this has been exultingly dilated upon by many who have classed themselves among the opponents of Christianity. But if credulity has any meaning, it is the belief of that which is not true. And therefore it applies to all who

On the alleged credulity of the middle ages.

BOOK
VII.HISTORY
OF RELI-
GION IN
ENGLAND.

assert things to be true which are not so, and to those who disbelieve or deny the actual facts of history and nature. For La Place to have believed that the planets, whose movement and laws he shews to be those of the most profound and unerring science, were formed and placed in their positions, and moved and had all their force exactly balanced by mere chance and accident, and not by the will and government of an intelligent Being, he must have been as credulous of the improbable and the unlike, as the vulgarest trembler that ever bowed before the bones or rags of a Catholic saint. For Voltaire to have believed the numerous historical falsehoods which he states and argues upon in his various books against the Jewish and Christian religions, and for others to rely upon his assertions, and to become disbelievers upon such authorities, both he and they must have been as credulous as every individual in the middle ages was, who accredited all the legends and miracles which the papal church attached to the names, whom it chose to consecrate and to exalt into its saintly calendar. It is the belief of what is not true, and the disbelief of what is so, which constitutes credulity, and not the subject of either. To disbelieve the existence and agency of the Deity, is to believe the less explicable and less possible power of chance, or some nominal nothing, producing science, skill, intellect and feeling. The most ignorant bigot and the most sceptical philosopher act, therefore, alike in their credulity and incredulity, and neither has any right to reprobate in this respect the other. Both act contrary to reason, and make other motives or principles their determining governors.

It would occupy too large a portion of this Work, to detail all the false opinions and systems which

prevailed in the Christian world, under the patronage, and sometimes by the command of the papal hierarchy. They will be found in the writings of our first reformers, who so boldly and successfully attacked them; and to them we must refer the more curious reader. It will be sufficient to the present Work, to have thus touched on the more prominent and characterizing features: and it only remains to give a few moments of attention to that great portion of our ecclesiastical population, which the monastic institution comprised.¹⁰¹

¹⁰¹ From the great and lasting influence on the middle ages, we will subjoin the following

Analysis of Peter Lombard's Sentences:

He begins by declaring the Trinity to be the one and only true God; Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; the same in essence, and the Supreme Good; discernible by the most purified minds. This exalted and most excellent subject should be contemplated with modesty and veneration, p. 10. The divine personalities are inseparable inequality, and yet so distinct, that neither is the other, p. 11. He mentions the indications of the Trinity in the Old Testament, and the 'special testimonies' of the Holy Spirit both in that and in the New, 14-17.

He shews that the Creator may be known from His works, p. 17; and proves his existence by many inferences, p. 18. He thinks the soul consists of mind, knowledge and love, and fancies a similitude between these and the personalities of the godhead, p. 25.

He discusses some of the nicer distinctions and questions of the age, on the subject of the divine nature, neither profitable then, nor necessary now, p. 27-47.

He expatiates on the immutability and uncompounded singleness of the divine essence, unlike the complexity of all material bodies, 48-53; and agrees, that there is nothing in God but what is God, p. 53.

He states the distinctions of the three Persons, amid the oneness of the essence, 54-60; and enlarges on the Holy Spirit. He characterises it by the peculiar quality of divine love, as he does the Son by wisdom, 61-65. He treats of the procession of the Spirit from both the paternal and filial personalities, and reasons against the Greeks, who confine it to the former, 66-88. On this subject, he indulges a more subtle speculation, than we should now think it serviceable to pursue.

Having noticed the visible missions of the Holy Spirit, in the form of a dove, on our Saviour at his baptism, and of the lambent flames on the apostles at Pentecost, p. 89, he considers its invisible communications with the human mind. Being itself love, as it unites by that the divine Father and the Son, so it connects us with both. By its sacred influence we love God, and we love mankind; and he that cherishes the affection

BOOK
VII.HISTORY
OF RELI-
GION IN
ENGLAND.

by which he is attached to his fellow-creatures, loves God in himself, because that affection is divine, since God is love, 92-5.

He considers the next operation of the Holy Spirit to be the production in us of the love to God and man. 'There is nothing in man by which he can love God but what is from God; nothing is more excellent than this divine gift. There are other agencies of the Spirit, but without this result nothing will avail us. This sacred feeling alone divides the two future kingdoms.' 96. He answers some objections to these ideas, 97-103, and then discusses a very needless verbal nicety which some had raised, whether this invaluable gift be a 'donum,' or a 'datum,' 104-110. His conclusion seems to be, that *dari* and *donari*, to be given and to be granted, are pretty much the same. Our common sense would certainly not make much difference between them, tho the latter may imply a previous petition.

The logical distinction called the *qualitas* is then considered in the divine Persons. He asserts their co-eternity and co-equality; and that eternity, greatness and power, tho different in themselves, are but one in the godhead. None of the sacred Three is greater than the other. The nature of each is perfect, and their mutual union complete, 111-114. There are no parts in the divine essence: It is ever one, full and entire, 115. He pursues this topic thro the logical particularizations of genus, species and individuals, 116-121, and concludes it by his opinion, that the Deity is 'trinus,' but not 'triplex,' 122.

It is needless now to enumerate the other subtle distinctions and questions of the Deity, which, his contemporaries being accustomed to agitate, Lombard was obliged to consider and determine, 123. They are words without knowledge, discussed by arguments without use, and occupy many pages, 123-206. We may, to our own advantage, leave them undisturbed in their literary oblivion. They are all ingenious, generally harmless; but too unprofitable to receive the present attention of mankind, which so much solid knowledge demands, and will much better reward.

He proceeds then to consider the knowledge, the prescience, the providence, the dispositions, the predestination, the will and the power of God. On all these points, he displays much talent and judgment, but debates much that is quite unnecessary to know, and absurd to discuss, as, whether all things are in the essence of the Deity, or in Him by essence, p. 211: Whether, if all things be in Him, evil be in Him, v. 2. Where He was before creation existed, 218. Whether created spirits are local or circumscribable, which he decides they are, 224. Whether the Divine Being can know more than he knows, 234, or do any thing better than he does, p. 255.

He teaches, from St. Austin, that predestination is the preparation of grace, but cannot be without prescience: tho there may be prescience without predestination, because the Deity foreknows evil, but does not produce it. He has predestinated those whom he elects: he has reprobated the rest. The number of the elect is definite, p. 236. The remainder of the first book is on the Divine Omnipotence and Will, 246-281.

His second book treats largely on the Angels, on the Creation of Man, and on the Temptation and Fall, 291-390. Man had the aid of grace at his formation, and the power of abiding in it; by that he could have resisted evil, tho not have perfected good. He could have lived without sin, tho without a further assistance of grace he could not attain that

spiritual which would deserve more. In 39. Free-will is the faculty of choosing well or ill, which, with assisting grace, good is chosen. It is free as it is willing, because it can be made to either good or evil yet, without grace assisting, it does not choose the good, but of itself would select the contrary. 39-40. Free-will is then more properly discussed 40-47; and grace, in its distinction of operating and co-operating. The last prepares the heart of man to what good he must expect him to attain it. 408. No human merit precedes the divine grace: our will to good follows, not never goes before it. 410. Our will is not free until grace emancipates it from our appetites. To be free to good, it must be freed from sin. The thought of good may precede will, but will not lead to a right life, nor be sufficient for salvation without it. 415. The intellect does stronger than the weaker affections can follow. Grace is always a gratuitous gift. It must be freely given, because we can do nothing to deserve it until we have received it. Yet many good actions may be done before it and besides it, by man, through his free-will: not in merit, till the ground, heart, houses and many other need things, without any co-operation of grace, 415.

He then defines virtue to be that good quality of mind by which we live rightly, and which God alone produces in us. p. 416. All the virtues are His operations on our soul, so much as His gift. It comes not to us from the force of nature, but from Him. We are not justified by our free will, but by the grace of Christ, which rectifies our will. This must co-operate, but will not of itself be virtuous. The divine influence must lead and prepare it, that it may be good. 417. We are free to all, but not able to rise upon without His help, 418. Thus grace is the principal cause of good will and good actions. Preventing or antecedent grace produces in the soul good affections; and there can be no human merit without it, 419.

From the gifts of virtue we are good, and live righteously; and from grace, which is not merit, but makes it, tho not without our free will, our merits come; that is, those good affections, and their progress, and good works, which God rewards in us, and which are His gifts, 420.

He then urges, that our free will, without preventent and assisting grace, is not sufficient for our salvation, nor to attain righteousness: and he opposes the new Pelagians, who were so exalting free will as to leave no room for grace. He maintains, with St. Jerom, that our will is always free, but needs the divine aid. Man always has the power of sinning or not sinning. His mind has a natural aptitude to believe and love, but needs the heavenly grace to give it the right direction, and to make its powers and effects available to their end, 426, 7.

On original sin, he states, that the fathers speak with some obscurity, and the scholastic doctors variously, about it. He considers it to be that 'culpa,' which has brought on human nature the doom of death, and is now born with us, and inclines us to impiety, and from which no one is freed but by faith in the Mediator between God and man, 433.

It is the 'fomes peccati,' from which all evil desires proceed. It flowed from the disobedience of Adam, and from his erring will, 436. It began in the body, and thence tainted the soul, 439. Its imputed guilt is removed by baptism; after which only the 'pena peccati' remains; before this there were both the pena and the culpa, 443.

Many questions and nice distinctions, connected with this subject, are discussed at length, 444-459; and he then considers what is sin, and

BOOK
VII.HISTORY
OF RELI-
GION IN
ENGLAND.

what its punishment. Sin is the evil interior and exterior act; evil thoughts, evil speaking and evil works; and consists chiefly in the will, 461.

Its greatest mischief is, that it separates us from God, places us at a distance from Him, and is continually creating in us a dissimilitude to Him. Nothing makes man so unlike God as sin, 466.

It is the privation and conception of all good in the soul, and has deprived the body of its immortality and impassibility, 467.

He discusses the end of actions. The end or aim of a good will is eternal life, divine love, God himself, 478. He debates several nice distinctions on the intention and will, 480-499; and closes the book by his remarks on the sin against the Holy Spirit, and on the origin of our power of sinning, 500-507.

His third book is on the Divine Incarnation, and on the Human Nature, Qualities and Death of Christ. We smile to see such a point discussed, as whether he might have been born a woman as well as a man, p. 562; but the age was fond of putting every conceivable question. He urges, that our Saviour died for our deliverance and beatification. He became the sacrifice for us; and by his death we have obtained access to paradise, redemption from sin, and the adoption of the sons of glory. None but the Lion of Judah could have accomplished this. All other men were debtors. None of them could offer a sacrifice sufficient for our reconciliation, 591. He was the proper victim, and his most consummate humiliation has opened to us the kingdom of heaven, and obliterated the decree of death against us. 'We could be saved in no other way than by his death,' p. 592. By that He has redeemed us from the devil, from sin, and from its punishment, *ib.* He alone is our Redeemer, 555. He alone is our Mediator, 596.

Faith is the virtue by which we believe what we do not see, that relates to religion; but it must be united with that divine love, which is the mother of all the virtues. By this it operates; by this Christ dwells in the heart. Faith, without love, is vain. Faith, with this affection, is a Christian's faith; without it, a demon's, p. 612. These believed Him to be the Messiah, but did not believe in Him. Only to believe God, as that He is God, or speaks truth, the bad may do; but to believe in Him, is that belief by which we love Him, advance to Him, adhere to Him, and become incorporated with Him. By such a faith the impious is justified; and this faith works by love; and those only should be called good works which are done for the love of Him, 613.

After disserting more on faith and hope, he expatiates largely and ably on the love of God and man, 626-648. The four cardinal virtues, 649; the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit, 650-656; the difference between wisdom, knowledge and intellect, 657-9; the connexion of the virtues, 660-3, and the Ten Commandments, 664, are the other topics of this book.

The fourth book treats on the Sacraments, 689. These he considers to be baptism, 697; confirmation, 723; the eucharist, in which he affirms the real transubstantiation, 724-749; penitence, 750-816; extreme unction, 817; ordination, 820-836; and marriage, 837-907. He discusses these at great length; and on baptism says, that the cause of the institution is the renovation of the mind; that man, who by sin had become old, might, by the grace of baptism, be renewed, which occurs

by the deposition of the vices, and the collection of the virtues: at that the new man, his sins being removed, may be adorned with virtues, p. 702. After all these he treats of the resurrection, 904-918: and closes his work with the last judgment, and final abatement of all mankind, 929-947.

None of the technical superstitions and objectionable rites of the Romish church are handled or recommended in it: and therefore every one had the power of adapting, even from Peter Lombard's appointed book, a more enlightened system of religion, if he had chosen to cultivate it. Some of his topics and tenets are those of pure and enlightened Christianity; and it was the voluntary imperfection of his readers which left these valuable parts little noticed, while they attended chiefly to such as could be made the themes of logical or metaphysical battle, and thereby the means of that personal distinction, and of those worldly advantages, for which the acquisition of it was most generally studied. It prevented no one from being a good Christian, tho' it was convertible, and was repeatedly converted, to the production of the barren and pugnacious schoolmen.

CHAP.

I

ORIGIN OF
THEOLOGICAL
SYSTEM IN
ENGLAND.

C H A P. II.

On the Anglo-Norman Monasteries — on the Franciscan and Dominican Persecutions — and Belief in the Miracles of the Saints.

BOOK
VII.

ANGLO-
NORMAN
MONASTE-
RIES,
FRANCIS-
CAN

IN the History of the Anglo-Saxons, we found that Dunstan and his sovereign Edgar had filled England with a taste for monks and monasteries, and that the king boasted, as a merit, that he had built forty-seven of these conventual edifices.¹ The Danish dynasties intercepted this peculiar enthusiasm; and, during the reign of Edward the Confessor, such a change had taken place in the religious humor of the Anglo-Saxons, that the monastic profession fell into disrepute, and the monasteries were suffered to decay into unlamented ruin.²

The bishops appointed by William after the Norman Conquest, continuing the same disposition, endeavored to remove the remaining monks from the residences they occupied, and to supply their places by the untensured clergy.³ If their plan had succeeded, monkery might have disappeared from England, and the papal hierarchy would have lost one of the greatest instruments of its predominance; but Europe would, in that case, not have so rapidly, if at all, attained either the civilization or the literature which these establishments imparted. The archbishops were

¹ See Hist. Angl. Sax. vol. 2. p. 264. 5th ed.

² Eadmer, p. 4. Lanf. Vita, p. 8.

³ Eadmer, p. 10.

DURING THE MIDDLE AGES.

beginning to discontinue their dependence on Rome;⁴ many of the clergy married;⁵ and even the monks who continued in the country, were diverging fast into the habits of the laity.⁶ These habits were becoming so prevalent, that it was found necessary to degrade an archbishop for his excessive fondness for hunting and bird-fighting.⁷ Noblemen were hearing divine service in their bed-chambers instead of the churches, and practising their vices, while their careless clergy were looking on, and verbally praying in a language which they neither understood nor could pronounce; and general habits of dissoluteness and inebriety pervaded the country. Hence, if the Norman Conquest had not occurred, religion would have expired in England, or have sunk to that combination of ceremonies and sensuality, which the Paganism of antiquity had displayed in its declining state.

The progress of this change was arrested by Lanfranc, whom, on account of his personal merit, William had called out of Normandy to the see of Canterbury. He began this new dignity by endeavoring to obtain his pallium without going to Rome. The policy of the papal court, which had experienced the vast importance to its influence in other countries, of making their prelates come personally to Rome, refused this indulgence; and Lanfranc was compelled to go to Italy. From that period, his conduct became adapted to the counsels of the Vatican. After that visit, he would neither consecrate nor perform any act without first consulting the Pope.⁸ He referred

⁴ Eadmer, p. 5.

⁵ Lanfranc's Opera, p. 301. Malm. 228.

⁶ Eadmer, 5. Malm. 214.

⁷ Malm. 100.

⁸ Lanf. Op. p. 301.

BOOK
VII.

ANGLO-
NORMAN
MONASTE-
RIES,
FRANCIS-
CAN

to Rome the dispute he had with the see of York for precedency. He suffered the Pope to convene by his precept, in England, a council of the English prelates, to determine points of discipline arising in that country;⁹ and the Pope was so satisfied with his docility, that he wrote to William to exhort him to acquiesce in the advice of Lanfranc.¹⁰

The monks of Europe had systematically received the peculiar countenance of the court of Rome. In no point did personal interest and the public welfare more unite at this period, than in the encouragement of monasteries. Barbaric Europe had still to be taught letters, to be civilized, and to be made moral. Monks only would acquire the literature and preserve the true religious feeling that was wanted. The world was a world of violence and battle, of the grossest manners, and the most benighted ignorance. Their religion was a nomenclature of superstitious ceremonies. Their moral code, passion, power, and self-will. To withdraw in every district a certain portion of the population from the evil habits of the day; and to subject them, by constant tuition, habit, and hourly practices, to stated exercises of devotion, to religious meditation, to that negative virtue which the absence of vice, temptation, and opportunity produces; and to those ascetic self-restraints which the monastic discipline compels; was to begin a new description of moral character, which tho not the best exemplar of human virtue, was the best that was then attainable. The religious savage is always melancholy, severe, formal, and extravagant in his religion, because he can be no other: he must be civilized into reason, sensibility, and happiness, before his

⁹ Wilk. Concil. vol. 1. p. 323.

¹⁰ Lanf. Op. p. 326.

faith will bear the characters of intelligence, or his devotion display the emotions of gratitude and love. The monk was the best religionist that could then be manufactured, both for his own improvement, and also for his beneficial operation on his fierce contemporaries. The Anglo-Norman monk suited the Anglo-Norman baron, and was the only sort of Christian minister that could have instructed or controlled him. The common clergy would have secularized into laity, as they were doing, when Lanfranc saved religion from its shipwreck. Monasteries, therefore, grew out of the necessities of the day, and were efficacious instruments of the national melioration, till better agents arose.

Lanfranc was a sincere believer, and wished to benefit the country over which he presided. He was shocked at its immoralities and irreligion, and he patronized the monastic clergy for their practical utilities. Hence, when the Pope wrote to him, enjoining him to resist the efforts made at Canterbury against the monks, Lanfranc eagerly obeyed his spiritual lord. He did more; he reformed their relaxed system; he caused the old monasteries to be repaired, and new ones to be constructed. He composed himself a code of monastic constitutions, which has descended to us. By his exertions, he established a new fashion in the island in their favor; and from his time to the Reformation, England swarmed with monks, till they became as pernicious as they had once been beneficial.

On perusing Lanfranc's monkish code, we can have no difficulty in perceiving that it tends to form, not intellectual, but mechanical devotion. It does not educate an intelligent being to love and adore the

CHAP
II.

CAN AND
DOMINI-
CAN PER-
SECU-
TIONS, ET

BOOK
VII:

ANGLO-
NORMAN
MONASTE-
RIES,
FRANCIS-
CAN

great source of his existence with grateful reason, but it carves out a cowed automaton. There is no provision for moulding the heart, for meliorating the temper, for guiding and improving the feelings, or for enlarging and informing the mind. The man is considered as a piece of clock-work. Ritual devotion is to be the duty and purpose of his existence, and he is moved every hour of every day to the same specific actions, with unvaried monotony. Certain appropriated movements are to be performed daily between October and Advent, certain others between Advent and Lent, others again during Lent, and others in Passion Week, at Easter, Whitsuntide, and afterwards. These motions consist of rising at appointed times, putting on and off their garments, singing peculiar hymns, reading selected chapters, visiting specified places, saying particular prayers, and performing prescribed actions on fixed signals, one hour after another, till the day is consumed by the wearisome and debilitating uniformity. But there is scarcely any thing enjoined which a piece of mechanism could not be constructed to do, if art could make it vocal.

Thus, called from their beds before day-break, they are to go in their night-clothes to the church, to sing; thence to the cloister and hear the boys read, till the bell tolls for them to put on their shoes. They are to pass to the dormitory for their day-dress, and to the washing-house to wash. They are to comb themselves: and when the great bell sounds, they must enter the church to receive the holy water. On the signal of another bell, they are to pray; and of another bell, to sing; and afterwards to proceed to the altar, to say or hear mass. They were again to dress

themselves, and to return to the choir, to sit there till the bell summoned them to the chapter-house. On another signal, they were to resort to the refectory. After a certain hour, no one was to speak till the children left the monastery; then, when the bell sounded again, their shoes were to be taken off, their hands to be washed, and they were to enter the church, to repeat the litany, and to hear high mass. At another signal, they were to go in procession. When the bell vibrated again, they were to pray, and afterwards to revisit the refectory. Some were then to sit in the choir, and they, who liked, might read. At a fresh signal, the nones were to be sung. Similar tasks were to succeed again in allotted order, till they were dismissed to their bed.¹¹ Even their shaving and blood-letting were governed by fixed rules.¹² In the repetition of these habits passed all their time, with a slight variation of a few additional ceremonies at other seasons of the year. All these formularies seem more calculated to produce a technical religion of the limbs and voice, than that intelligent piety of the heart which is the noblest homage of man to his Creator, and the best parent of the virtues that are the most serviceable to our fellow-creatures. Hence, when the first enthusiasm passed away, and monasteries became wealthy, they are reproached for uniting with their mechanical devotion the most corrupted luxury. Some of their minds, too lofty to be sensual, took the direction of a proud and subtle ambition, that which was more dangerous to the national peace, and not at all more favorable to individual virtue.

CHAP.
II.

CAN AND
DOMINI-
CAN PER-
SECU-
TIONS, ETC.

¹¹ See Lanf. Opera, pp. 254—292.

¹² Ibid. pp. 283, 284.—His orders for the hospitium, the eleemosynarius, and infirmarius, pp. 281, 282, are interesting: and see those on the itinerant brethren, p. 285; on the novices, p. 287; and on the schools, p. 292.

BOOK
VII.

ANGLO-
NORMAN
MONAS-
TERIES,
FRANCIS-
CAN

But these practices constituted a species of sanctity that appeared wonderful to the ignorance and animal habits of the worldly population. Their dissimilarity to common life was impressive. Their singularities were the more venerable, even for their uselessness, for that is the character of superstitious rites. Their unintelligibility in an ignorant age, increases the belief of their magical efficacy; and the monk, with his routine of conventual offices, like the Roman priest with his genuflexions and theatrical motions, seemed the more mysterious and awful to the lawless baron, the warrior-knight and the staring vulgar. What our enlightened times deem mummery and form, the dark ages revered. We require the reason to be convinced and the heart to be moved; they were satisfied if their senses were forcibly struck, and their imagination excited. The superstitious and the ignorant are easily governed by superstition, and, while their mental malady lasts, usually prefer it. The attention of the monks to agricultural cultivation greatly increased the produce of their landed property, and gave them an abundance,¹³ which, after filling their establishments with costly furniture and precious jewels and vestments, seduced them to luxury, vice, unpopularity and ruin.¹⁴

¹³ We have one incident on which we may calculate their growing wealth. In Edward the Second's reign, the abbey of Croyland was for a time, during a vacancy, in the king's hands. It then contained 41 monks, 15 corrodarii, and 36 servitores and ministri. The allowance ordered from the exchequer for their maintenance, was sixpence a day to the prior, three-pence to each of the monks and corrodarii, and two-pence to the others. The residue of the income was retained by the king, and it produced him £.8. 1. 6. a week. Hist. Croyland, Gale Script. vol. 1. p. 482. The allowances to them would be £. 7. 3. 6. a week; so that their maintenance did not amount to half their revenues, in this monastery. Their charity to the poor was usually in provisions, and entirely at their own discretion.

¹⁴ Dugdale, in his *Monasticon* to his *Monasticon*, gives much information on the English monasteries.

At the same time it must be admitted, that monastic retirements are peculiarly fitted for the cultivation of meditative and spiritual religion ; of piety, as a feeling of the heart, as a sympathy of the affections, and as a divine sentiment receding from the world, and connecting the incorporeal man with his incorporeal Creator. The world, as its habits and conversation usually are, is unlike its God, and incompatible with the intellect's aspirant intercourse with him. To enjoy this, man must withdraw, more or less, to solitude, to nature and to secret contemplation. It is only when the world forgetting, and by the world forgot, that the spirit can attain that communion with its Maker, which constitutes the sweetest anticipation of heaven in this life, and will compose the largest portion of our beatitude hereafter. Monasteries favored the cultivation of these feelings ; and yet, if they were not peopled by congenial spirits, they became a little peculiar world, as unsuitable to all holy aspirations, as the great theatre of bustle, care and luxury was, from which they seemed a refuge. At first, the associated conventualists were pious, good and fervent. But monastic societies, like all others, soon degenerated, both in spirit and practice ; and then they became the antagonist to ardent piety, instead of its improvers.¹⁵

The monasteries, like the papacy, produced their

CHAP.
II.

CAN AND
DOMINI-
CAN PER-
SECU-
TIONS, ETC.

¹⁵ That monasteries are more injurious than beneficial, when the fervor of piety declines in them, we have the authority of a descendant of sir Thomas More, who was herself one of the convent of Cambray, for believing. The lady says, that living in them, 'as I can speak by experience, if one be not in a right course of prayer, and other exercises between God and our soul, one's nature groweth *much worse* than ever it would have been if she had lived in the world. Pride and self-love find means to strengthen themselves exceedingly in one in religion, if she be not in a course that may teach her and procure her true humility.' Gertrude More's Confessions, p. 246 and 13. 'By the corrections and contradictions, which cannot be avoided in a religious community, I found my heart grown as hard as a stone.' Ib. p. 14.

BOOK
VII.

ANGLO-
NORMAN
MONAS-
TERIES,
FRANCIS-
CAN

full share of usefulness in their day. The monks were unwearied collectors and transcribers of books; and to their libraries and copyists we owe the preservation of most of the classics which we possess.¹⁶ For nearly all the literature, science, and education of Europe, from the Gothic irruptions to the fourteenth century, we are indebted to them. Building their monasteries in woods and deserts, they occasioned the cultivation of many uninhabitable districts, and towns and villages rapidly grew up and multiplied under their fostering patronage.¹⁷ So prone were the monks to husbandry, that in founding an abbey at Caen, William the Conqueror made a restriction in their charter, that they should not destroy the woods for the sake of agriculture, and he reserved to himself the wild beasts.¹⁸ In time of war and trouble, the monasteries became the depository of the property of the neighborhood, and the asylum of endangered persons.¹⁹ They were the main teachers of the morality of the age; and, tho it was greatly discolored by superstition, it was a treasure of good to the

¹⁶ Thus the first six books of the *Annals of Tacitus*, after a diligent search all over Europe, were found in the monastery of Corbey, on the Weser.

¹⁷ Thus the celebrated abbey of Fulda was founded in a '*locus sylvaticus, in eremo vastissimæ solitudinis*,' says Boniface. *Mag. Bib.* vol. 16. pp. 115. 121. Three instances of this sort may be seen in *Du Chesne's Norm. Script.* pp. 236. 458. 464. So St. Bernard formed his famous abbey of Clairval in a desert, encompassed by a wild forest, which was a retreat for robbers. He and his twelve monks grubbed up a sufficient spot; and with the assistance of the bishop and country people, built themselves little cells. Their bread was made either of the coarse barley or vetches, which they raised; and they sometimes boiled beech-tree leaves for their herbs. A. Butler, v. 8. p. 241. It became one of the finest abbeys on the continent, and had 800 abbeys subject to it. p. 269. It contained 700 monks at Bernard's death. He also founded 160 other monasteries. *ib.*

¹⁸ See the Charter, Lanfr. Op. note p. 27.

¹⁹ *Ingulf. Hist.* I add, with pleasure, Dr. Milner's just statement: 'Villages, towns, and cities, were increased and flourished round most of our great abbeys. Rumsey, Beaulieu, Amesbury, Croyland, Peterborough, Ely, Durham and Westminster, were absolute solitudes before monasteries were erected on their site.' *End. Rel. Contriv.* p. 61.

warlike savages whom it civilized. For nearly two centuries after the Conquest there was little peace or mental improvement beyond the monastery. It then became the natural resort of the gentle, the mild, the quiet, and the studious. It was voluntarily chosen by many men of great talents, piety, rank, and worldly business; and when monks were so popular as to take the lead in the important transactions of life, their walls contained frequently a collection of intellectual and cultivated society, which could at that time be paralleled no where else. They repeatedly supplied the government with money, by the loan of actual supplies; or of their plate and jewels to obtain it from the money-brokers. They nourished the improving energies of society, till they themselves were far outstripped by the progress, which, tho they had principally occasioned, they could never overtake. They, like the popedom and its artificial system, were temporary good; and fame, not present influence, or re-established power, is their proper reward.

To one class of society, of peculiar importance to all, from its number, its services, its general patience, its occasional fractiousness, and its contingent danger: — the class of the poor and unprovided — the monastic institutions were beacons of refuge and fountains of most needed benevolence, as long as any religious spirit actuated their communities. The abstraction of spontaneous fertility from the earth, in all those species of vegetation which constitute the food of man, was attached to his transgression upon its commencement in our first ancestor, and still continues to pursue its repetitions and perpetuation in his descendants. The surface of the globe abounds with spontaneous productions for its animal kingdom, in its

CHAP.

II.

CAN AND
DOMINI-
CAN PER-
SECU-
TIONS, ETC

BOOK
VII.

ANGLO-
NORMAN
MONAS-
TERIES,
FRANCIS-
CAN

herbage and trees. All creatures except mankind find their subsistence ever growing, ready provided and plentiful in all parts of the world, without their labor and care. But on man, the superior and sovereign of all, the sentence has passed, and its operation has never ceased, that in the sweat of his face he should eat his bread; that instead of corn, its spontaneous produce as to his subsistence should be thorns and thistles; that the ground should, for this purpose, remain under a malediction on his account; and that his needed sustenance should be acquired in sorrow and anxiety,—by hard labor, and with varying and uncertain supply.²⁰ The history of society has been a running commentary on this primeval appointment. The more the human population has increased, the more imperious have the labor and skill of its tillage become; and the greater difficulty has arisen, for all that live to obtain a competent share of its cultivated fertility. It is only a part of mankind as they enlarge, who can thus apply their toil and talents to agriculture; and it is a natural right that they, like the rest, should possess as their own property what their labor and care produce or obtain. It is so in all the works and fabrications of society. The mechanic and the manufacturer retain for their own benefit all the articles which their industry or contrivance creates, and part with none without receiving an equivalent in value. The farmer and land proprietor exercise the same indisputable right; and hence, in all ages, the food of mankind has always come into the hands and remained the property of its producers and owners, which others can only share by the exchange of some corresponding advantage. The means of this

²⁰ Gen. 3. 17-19.

exchange the great bulk of mankind never naturally possess. They are born without them. They have appetites, limbs and strength—but these will not always produce the commodities or supplies by which food can be purchased—nor in quantity sufficient. Their labor must be wanted, before it will be employed and paid for. Their goods in trade must be required, and what they can manufacture must be liked and purchased by others, before any benefit can arise to them from it. The arrangements and course of society, from the tendency and effect of general convenience and necessity, furnish to the largest portion of the subsisting population the means of existence, of which they were born destitute; the ordinary business and trades and professions of life demand and sufficiently remunerate the labor and skill of the greatest proportion of all that are living, and from this result, the general stream of human life flows comfortably and quietly along.

But in every period of the world, there have always been great numbers whom the usual channels of industry and maintenance could not receive nor occupy—who have found themselves unprovided with the means of subsistence, and who are unable to make any of the practicable sources of it available or accessible to them. From this unprovided class the poor of all conditions arise. Each rank and station of society has them, and evils occur to all from their necessities, restlessness and natural discontent.

The nations of antiquity felt this pursuing inconvenience, and took various ways of diminishing it; some most cruel, others less objectionable and even salutary. The Phœnicians and Egyptians planted their superfluous population in distant settlements;

CHAP.
II.

CAN AND
DOMINI-
CAN PER-
SECU-
TIONS, ETC.

BOOK
VII.

ANGLO-
NORMAN
MONAS-
TERIES,
FRANCIS-
CAN

Carthage relieved herself by an annual drain of this description. The dread of their necessary maintenance may have been the chief cause of Eastern nations putting their enemies to the sword, with all their families, when they took towns or overran a country. It was the acknowledged reason for permitted and often consecrated infanticide; and it made human sacrifices less abhorrent to their feelings. The Greeks compelled their superabundant youth to emigrate elsewhere. Athens largely colonized; Sparta legalized the destruction of their Helot population when their numbers multiplied. Rome made both civil and military colonization a part of her national policy; and her aristocracy was encouraged to place distinction in the possession of the largest quantity of domestic slaves: while the Gothic and Celtic nations around them repeatedly discharged their superabounding and necessitous population in the warlike expeditions which overflowed Europe.

In the middle ages, as the barbaric torrents settled into the ranks and possessions of regular society, their perpetual wars, both public and private, consumed myriads every year. The crusades drained off still more. Famines and diseases, arising from ignorance and evil habits, were likewise always operating; and the enlarging commerce of the world, advantageously to every order, occupied and supplied the wants and activity of others. But it was principally the possessioned church and richly endowed monasteries which invited, received and sustained the unprovided population, and relieved the rest of society from the dangerous burthen, when the taste for peaceful and improving life spread around. The younger branches of the nobility and gentry obtained both respectability

and comfortable subsistence, from the benefices and emoluments of the possessed church : and the monasteries were continually admitting into their communities a succession of members from the lower classes of society. They likewise so invariably appropriated a large portion of their own agricultural produce, and of the harvests and revenues of their farmed estates to the distribution of daily or weekly relief, to all the necessitous and unprovided who applied for it, that no extraordinary evils or sufferings arose to society at large from its unemployed and indigent population, until luxury and worldly ambition, and selfish objects led abbots and monks and prelates to consume on themselves most of what they had given to the poor, and to vie with the landed aristocracy in dress, pomp, banquets, menial state and courtly expenditure. Then the clamor of all orders arose for their reformation or abolition. They resisted reform ; and maintained their own common right, the claim and practice of every one, to use their property as they pleased. This demand was not inequitable in some respects, as long as vested property was upheld generally in society, as perhaps it must always be for its mutual welfare. But a distinction was early taken, that their territorial possessions had been donations, not purchases ; and that the gifts had always been attended with a condition sometimes directly expressed, but at all times implied, that a competent portion should be devoted to the poor and destitute. On this historical truth, the warfare against them was prosecuted and encouraged, until their depression and spoliation being no longer unpopular, they were robbed of their estates and endowments by those who, disregarding all the pretensions and necessities of the indigent, obtained

CHAP.

II.

CAN AND
MONASTIC-
CAN PER-
SECU-
TIONS, ETC

BOOK
VII.

ANGLO-
NORMAN
MONASTE-
RIES,
FRANCIS-
CAN

from the crown in future reigns, large grants and distributions for their own personal and family advantages and aggrandizement. This secular appropriation of ecclesiastical property, divested the needy and unprovided of all that relief from the charitable benevolences, which, tho much lessened, they had still obtained from it; and put society at large under the necessity of devising other measures for rescuing those who could not find or use the means of remunerating labor, from perishing miserably by want or famine. As yet the Mosaic intimation is continuing its fulfilment, "The poor will always be in the land." This is the fiat of the Creator; and a supernatural change of his vegetable course of nature, something like that of making corn a spontaneous and universal production, as the grass, air and water have always been, is that which can alone extinguish penury, destitution and personal misery. Man can only mitigate and relieve what he never will be able by any invention or policy to remove.²⁰

²⁰ We have a curious specimen of the feelings and reasonings of the aspiring minds in the unprovided class of society in our own times, in some passages of the essay written by NAPOLEON BONAPARTE at the age of twenty-one, on the prize question on Happiness, then proposed by the academy of Lyons. In this essay were the following remarks, penned by their author, when he had not the least anticipation that he was to become the emperor of France, and a triumphant conqueror:—

‘Man is born to be happy. Nature has provided him with all the organs which he requires for accomplishing the end of his existence. Happiness is therefore nothing else but enjoying life as is most consistent with our organization.

‘The wants of man are of a physical and spiritual nature; and if he is to be happy, he must be in a situation that enables him to satisfy each.

‘Man, from his birth, is entitled to such a share of the fruits of the earth as is necessary for the support of his life.

‘When he has attained to a certain age, his vigorous arm demands labor for producing the requisites of his existence. He casts a look around him. He finds the earth shared among a few of his species; and made subservient to pomp and luxury. He asks himself, ‘What entitles these people to this preference? Why are the idle every thing,

The thirteenth century began with the foundation of two new religious orders—not monks, but FRIARS, who became peculiarly celebrated, both in England and Europe. These were the Dominicans and the Franciscans.

St. Dominic, or as his real Spanish name was, St. Domingo, founded his religious order of preaching friars, in 1215; little aware of the celebrity which it was destined to acquire, and in some respects to deserve. He saw that the religious spirit of the clergy around him was declining, and he became zealous to revive it. “With this view he established

CHAP.

II.

CAN AND
DOMINI-
CAN PER-
SECU-
TIONS, ETC.

The Domi-
nican
order.

and he that labors nearly nothing? Why have they left nothing to myself, who have to support parents enfeebled by age?’

‘He hastens to his confessor, to propose to him his doubts.

‘Young man!’ replies the priest, ‘do not scrutinize the origin of society. God rules all. Commit yourself to Providence. This life is but a pilgrimage. All things here below are ordered by supreme justice, whose decrees we dare not investigate. Believe: obey: do not inquire. These are your duties.’

‘But an ambitious heart and common sense cannot rest satisfied with this reply. He therefore carries his doubts and uneasiness farther. He applies to the most learned person of the country. This happens to be a notary.

‘Learned man!’ says he to him, ‘they have shared the goods of the earth, and left nothing to myself.’

‘The learned man smiles at his simplicity, takes him into his office, and then proves to him, by act after act, by contract after contract, and by testament after testament, the legality of the allotment of which he complains.

‘How!’ he indignantly exclaims, ‘are those the legal titles of these people? Mine is more sacred, more unquestionable, more general. It is renewed with my transpiration; circulated with my blood; is written on my nerves and in my heart. It is an indispensable requisite of my existence, especially of my happiness.’ So saying, he seizes the dusty trash and throws it into the fire.

‘Now, he trembles at that powerful arm called justice. He returns to his cottage, to throw himself in an agony on his father. That venerable old man, enfeebled by age and bereft of sight, seems only to live because death has forgotten him.

‘My father!’ he exclaims, ‘you have given me life, and along with it an innate lively desire of happiness. But, alas! my father! robbers have shared all among themselves. They have left me nothing but my arms, and these, because they could not take them from me.’

Wertzell's Napoleon, For. Rev. N^o 8. p. 507.

BOOK
VII.

ANGLO-
NORMAN
MONAS-
TERIES,
FRANCIS-
CAN

an order of religious men, not like the ancient monks of the desert, who were laymen, or merely contemplators, but of such as, with the strictest retirement and assiduous exercises of contemplation, should join a close application to sacred studies, and all the functions of a clerical pastor, especially that of preaching." He prescribed austere fasts, perpetual abstinence from flesh, and the most severe poverty, ordaining that his friars should receive their coarse subsistence from the alms of the faithful, altho their houses were not forbidden, like the Franciscans, to enjoy in common small rents in money. His principal aim was, to multiply in the church zealous preachers.²¹ He did so; and by so doing, he powerfully counteracted the reforming, or as he and the Roman hierarchy styled them, the heretical teachers, who were then beginning to shake that chair, whose possessors, while they styled themselves the slave of slaves, were laboring to become the sovereign of every sovereign. St. Dominic did also more. He exhorted his allied brethren to promote the study of literature in his order; ²² and this precept made it the friend of learning, and caused it to contribute more to the knowledge that is connected with sacred studies, than any other religious institute except that of St. Ignatius.

The first Englishman that is recorded to have become a Dominican, was the ecclesiastical physician Joannes Ægidius, who, in 1224, studied at Paris,

²¹ I think it the most fair to take the account from a sincere and able Catholic, and therefore have inserted in the text Mr. Alban Butler's statement, from his *Lives*, vol. 8. p. 81. His biography of St. Dominic assembles the principal facts of his life, but gives them the kindest construction, and exhibits them in the most flattering colors.

²² Al. Butler, p. 85. His great maxim deserves our remembrance:— 'The man who governs his passions is master of the world. We must either command them, or be enslaved by them.'—Ib. 95.

and before he devoted himself to theology, was physician to the king of France.²³

CHAP.
II.

Dominic founded many convents in France and Italy, and sent some of his religious to establish others in Morocco, Portugal, Sweden, Norway and Ireland, and afterwards to Hungary, Greece, and Palestine.

CAN AND
DOMINI-
CAN PER-
SECU-
TIONS, ETC.

Forty-three houses of this order were in time raised in England, where from their black cloak and hood, they were popularly termed the Black Friars.²⁴

St. Dominic accompanied the persecuting army led by our earl of Leicester, in his cruel crusade against the Albigenes. It is immaterial whether he fought in their ranks or not. He marched with the invaders—he was their chief spiritual director—he saw what they did—he continued with them—he urged them to fight,²⁵ and he prayed for them while they were fighting. He incited and sanctioned the sanguinary expedition. To say, then, that he “had no share in those transactions,” is to affirm, in contradiction to the laws of every country, that there are no accessories in murder; that he was a zealous accessory in all that

²³ Tanner. Bib. p. 10.

²⁴ Al. Butler, p. 95. ‘This order hath given to the church, 5 popes, 48 cardinals, 23 patriarchs, 1500 bishops, 600 archbishops, and a great number of eminent doctors and writers.’—Ib.

²⁵ Mr. A. Butler admits, that before Leicester’s attack on the Albigenes and allies, ‘St. Dominic assured him, that God would grant him a glorious victory;’ and that in his sally on 12th Sept. 1213, the count dispersed the great army, which left the king of Arragon and 16,000 men dead in the field.—Mr. Butler adds, ‘This prediction was the only share which the original historians mention St. Dominic to have had in this war, 78. Was this an unimportant share? and after that exciting prediction, may we not wonder to read the statement, that he used no other arms against the heretics, ‘than those of instruction, patience, penance, fasting, watching, tears and prayer,’ p. 78. During this ‘great battle, St. Dominic was not in the field, as some moderns have pretended, but in the church within the fortress, at his prayers,’ 79. Prayers for those who are fighting, and yet not an abetting accessory! It is added, ‘The same was his practice on other like occasions.’ Ib. How, then, can he be distinguished in spirit, meaning and will, from his executing allies?

BOOK
VII.

ANGLO-
NORMAN
MONASTE-
RIES,
FRANCIS-
CAN

constitutes an accessory, must not be denied. This charge is inseparably associated with his memory, and darkens it with a funereal shade. As human judgment may err, the topic shall be urged no further. He is now gone, where that which is alone infallible, will be passed upon him. May every good intention that actuated him, produce in his behalf every possible extenuation !

But his name is connected with two other inventions, on which human criticism will variously appreciate him ; the institution of the celebrated devotion of the Rosary ; and that of the terrible, and to every human eye and heart, the ghastly Inquisition.

The Catholic devotion of the rosary, consists of the repetition of the Lord's prayer fifteen times, and of the verse addressed by the angel to the Virgin Mary, called the Ave Maria, one hundred and fifty times ;²⁶ while a corresponding number of the beads strung in a rosary, are counted or moved. How can reason separate such things from the precept which discourages all vain repetitions of prayer to the Supreme ! Only by supposing that the votary can connect with each bead and recital, " the exercise of a sublime contemplation," or intense feelings of " faith, hope, divine love, praise, and thanksgiving."²⁷ Some gifted minds and sensitive hearts may raise themselves to high sentiments of adoration with the first part of the pater noster ; and may dissolve in supplicating pathos as they pronounce its imploring petitions ; but in general such numerous recitals will be only rapid, formal, and unfeeling reiterations.

But if the effect of these pater nosters be to set the mind " commercing with the skies," can it be right

²⁶ Al. But. 79.

²⁷ Ib. 81.

that the heart should be excited one hundred and fifty times for the Virgin Mary, and one hundred for her Creator!—We see the aim of the inventor: to give her the pre-eminence in the devotion of the votary, and has it not had the effect, among the promiscuous multitude, of making supplicants to her supersede the worship of her Divine Superior?

CHAP.
I.

CAN ANY
DOMINICAN
CAN PER
STRE-
TION, IT

That St. Dominic was the author of the Inquisition, and the first inquisitor, has been the prevailing belief of both the Protestant and Catholic world, which his friendly advocates wish now to destroy and attempt to shake, by noticing some prior commissions of a similar tendency.* But it is admitted, that in 1215, he received a commission from the Pope, to judge and deliver to punishment, apostate and relapsed and obstinate heretics.† It is not denied that he acted upon this. His most favoring biographers display him exerting himself with an extraordinary—impartial men would say, with an inordinate, zeal against the Albigenses; and if the project of the actual court, which we now dread, and which humanity has long deprecated and lamented, was formed in the council of Thoulouse in 1229,‡ eight years after his death, yet this only transfers the guilt of its fabrication from St. Dominic to his church; even with this transfer, the two first inquisitors are acknowledged to have been two Dominican friars, who were nominated by

Examine
most of
the large
series.

* Manriquez and Baillet make the legate, Peter of Castelnau, the first inquisitor, in 1204. Fleury dates the origin of the tribunal from the decree of Verona in 1184, which ordered the bishops of Lombardy to detect heretics, and deliver them to the civil magistrate. Al. Butler, 76.

† Malvenda states this ad An. 1215. Butler 76. The Catholic continuators of Bollandus assert, that Dominic, in quality of inquisitor, delivered those among the Albigenses that were taken, and who persisted in being obstinate, to the secular judges, to be put to death. His Dominican biographers, Echard and Touron, dispute this, and Mr. Butler thinks they are right.

‡ Al. Butler, 77.

BOOK
VII.

ANGLO-
NORMAN
MONASTE-
RIES,
FRANCIS-
CAN

Gregory IX. in 1233.³¹ More than this I will not attempt to press, that I may not calumniate where I have no right to injure. But whatever was his individual concern in this terrific institution, the voice of history seems to be clear and decided, that his order has claimed as its privilege to be its chief supporters and executive instruments. The wise and happy jealousy of more cultivated nations forbidding it elsewhere, it has been established only in some part of Italy, in Malta, in Spain, and in Portugal.³²

St. Dominic died in 1221, at the age of fifty-one; and it is curious to observe how perfect a contrast to the principles of his institution the future history and practice of his order speedily became. Tho Mr. Alban Butler, not unjustly, ascribes to St Dominic, an earnest desire to produce by it that apostolic "spirit which is founded on a sincere contempt of the world, and a perfect disinterestedness: for so long as the love of the world, or a relish for its vanity, delights and riches, keeps possession of a heart, there can be no room for an holier guest."³³ Yet the Dominican friars, in no long time after their founder's demise, were distinguished not only for their preaching and learning,

³¹ Al. Butler, 77. It was a favorite maxim of St. Dominic, that 'It is better to be the hammer than the anvil,' p. 95. Yet his friends deny that he was ever the hammer! Can they also deny, that this sentiment is in direct contradiction to the first chapter of the sermon on the mount?

³² Al. Butler, ib. His personal mortifications may be true. They suit his ardent character. 'He practised all the austerities of the ancient fathers of the desert. He spent often whole nights in the church, watering the steps of the altar with his tears. He often allowed himself in his fasts, especially during Lent, no other nourishment than bread and water. He reserved only a short time for rest, which he took lying on a board.' Ib. 64. 78, 79.

³³ Al. But. p. 81. 'He took all possible precautions to prevent riches ever becoming the portion and the bane of his order.' Ib. p. 92. Could, then, the Dominicans justly blame those nations and governments which afterwards dispossessed them of their unduly acquired wealth and possessions?

but for their wealth, pomp, luxury, ambition, love of power, worldly activity, and worldly prosperity. The world soon flattered, conquered, rewarded, seduced, and governed those who came into being, only to rebuke, spiritualize and regenerate it.²⁴

The life of St. Francis is not connected with those violent and questionable actions, which give at times a dark and sanguinary line to the features of St. Dominic. He was as mild as the other was martial, or at least martially zealous. He never accompanied armies of persecution. He loved devout privacy, and sought to ally religion with tender feelings and affectionate effusions of the heart: but he also connected it with those extreme self-mortifications, which his contemporaries admired as much as we lament. In 1200 he began the foundation of his order, and made the abnegation of all property and manual labor two of its great distinctions. He would not suffer any temporal goods to be vested in it. His personal austerity was extreme: and he cultivated his pious sensibilities with a fervency which few could imitate. In 1219 he went to Egypt, to convert the Mahomedans of that country. In 1220, his order planted itself in England, at Canterbury, and soon after at Northampton. Their convent in London was built near Newgate, in 1306, by the queen of Edward I.; and Whittington, the lord mayor, in 1429, presented it with a large library. They had about eighty convents in this island,

²⁴ I wish not to abuse any man for his sincere belief, yet I cannot but regret that a mind so valuable as Mr. Alban Butler's, should seriously credit, that St. Dominic was raised in ecstasy, in a church, several cubits from the ground, and was seen for a considerable time, in that posture, in the air, till he gently fell down, p. 79. That on another occasion, he was lifted up in the same manner a whole cubit from the earth, and that he afterwards raised a cardinal's nephew, 'the lord Napoleon,' from the dead, p. 89.

CHAP.
II.

DAK. AND
FROM 1200-
1210. FROM
1210-1220.

THE 1220-1230.

The 1230-1240.
1240-1250.
1250-1260.

BOOK
VII.ANGLO-
NORMAN
MONASTE-
RIES,
FRANCIS-
CANPersecut-
ing spirit
of the
Romish
church.

besides a few female nunneries. They were known by the name of the Friars Minors, or Franciscans.³⁵

The order soon became so popular, that it forgot the poverty of its founder, and his self-denying principles, and rivalled the Dominicans in ambition, power, wealth and influence. It peculiarly directed itself to the cultivation of the disputatious talents of the mind, and became, as will be hereafter noticed, one of the great mental assailants of the established and possessed hierarchy. The Reformation was peculiarly indebted, in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, to their intellectual pugnacity and scholastic disquisitions.

But the great peculiarity, sin, and inseparable, tho sometimes concealed appurtenance and principle of the Roman church, wherever it has been dominant, and whenever its possessed hierarchy has been attacked or endangered, and has had sufficient power, and has been permitted to indulge its severities, is its steady, active, intolerant and unrelenting persecution of its religious opponents, till they have been crushed into debility or finally extirpated. Wherever other causes have not restrained it, the conclusion to which it has always unshrinkingly advanced, has been violent, unsparing and unpitying extermination. This conduct is so offensive to the human heart, and has so often put the human mind into censuring and hating hostility against it, that, in defiance of all that councils have in their canons enjoined, Popes in their bulls enforced, able casuists in their writings justified, and the most impartial history recorded, the charge is still repelled as calumny, tho the

³⁵ See Al. Butl. Lives, v. 10. 71-106. This order has had in it five popes, and forty-five cardinals, p. 100.

crime is repeated whenever the exigency occurs, and the power for the exertion coincides. Many Catholics, judging by their own hearts, feel the imputed atrocity to be impossible; and if they will distinguish their religion from their hierarchy, it will be but justice to admit, that persecution is no part of their faith, their sacred precepts, or their individual temper or practice. More than this cannot be truly conceded, nor equitably claimed. Persecution has ever been the avowed and unabrogated law, and the continued practice of their political and possessed hierarchy, from the time that it was assailed by the reforming spirit which arose in the eleventh century, to the present day, wherever the civil arm has allowed itself to be used by its ecclesiastical directors. In England, the government did not choose to aid the church with the temporal sword, till the house of Lancaster usurped the regal throne; and while that dynasty swayed the English sceptre, ecclesiastical persecution afflicted and disgraced the island. The house of York suspended the cruel fury of the endangered and too potent church; and that of Tudor broke its power, by abstracting its exorbitant wealth, by annihilating the papal supremacy in this country, and by subverting the superstitious inventions thro which it had been so long supported. The misled Mary permitted it during her short reign to exhibit again its fierce and merciless spirit, and to renew its horrors; but with her it fell into darkness, execration and public hatred, apparently for ever. The fears and resentful policy of her successors produced sanguinary reactions and irritations, which history now recollects only to brand and to abhor. The Catholic has a clear right, on his side, to expose and to stigmatise, the

CHAP.

II.

CAN AND
DOMINI-
CAN PER-
SECU-
TIONS, ETC.

BOOK
VII.

ANGLO-
NORMAN
MONASTE-
RIES,
FRANCIS-
CAN

cruel severities and executions, which in various reigns have here pursued priests, jesuits and laity, who preferred their ancient system, and persevered in its practice. The Protestant desires these to be distinguished and considered as political, and not as religious punishments. But the truth must be confessed, that in reality the Romish persecutions were strictly of the same sort. If the possessions and the power could have been separated from the belief, it is not probable that the Romish clergy would have ever abetted auto da fe's, Smithfield burnings, dungeons, whips, racks or inquisitions. The Catholic heart has all the sensibilities of the Protestant bosom. Its friendship is as kind; its sentiments as noble; its urbanities as courteous; its feelings as delicate; its devotion as pure; its philanthropy as ardent; and its understanding as vigorous, as the most distinguished members of the reformed church have at any time displayed. It is the contest for the world's goods; for property, rank, distinction and power, which darkens the mind, perverts the judgment, hardens the heart, and has ever given to persecution its demon spirit, its sophistical advocates, its attractive dress, and its sanctimonious features. There is nothing akin to it in religion, in nature, in intellect, or in God. May every system, sect and mind, now unite to banish it from the earth for ever!³⁶

Catholic
miracles.

One of the broadest features that distinguishes the mind of the middle ages from our own, and which

³⁶ One of the most pleasing accounts of the Roman Catholic religion in England, and of its later sufferings, is Mr. Charles Butler's *History of English Catholics*. Of him—shall I call him, in style and spirit, our English Fenelon?—I may truly say, both as to his conversation and writings, nor less as to his conduct, that if every Catholic mind had been like his own, the Catholic history would not have become what he must lament that it has too often exhibited itself to be.

CHAP.
II.CAN AND
DOMINI-
CAN PER-
SECU-
TIONS, ETI

still creates an impassable line between the Catholic and Protestant churches, is that belief in miracles, stated to be performed by the persons who have been made saints, or their relics, to which the papal infallibility has been repeatedly pledged, and which was an inseparable part of the faith of our forefathers, and which no Catholic is yet allowed, without the suspicion or imputation of heresy, to question. It is to the credit of England, that since the Norman Conquest, the fewest saints have been made from it, and the fewest miracles have been alleged to be produced in it. And it is equally to the honor of the Protestant communities, that altho the Romish hierarchy, wherever its branches spread, still persists in ascribing miracles, odor of sanctity, and official declarations of saintship to some of its members, yet none of the reformed clergy pretend to any supernatural powers, nor countenance any such supernatural tales. Irish credulity has been so creative of both, that even the Bollandist collectors of the *acta sanctorum* that their own extensible faith could be stretched to embrace, have warned their readers, that the miraculous narratives from Ireland must be received with prudent caution. Yet England, altho more sparingly, had some share in these wonderful productions, in the period from William the Conqueror to Henry the Eighth.³⁷ Few circumstances have been more provocative of general infidelity than these anti-rational pretensions; and in nothing was the solid judgment of our great reformers more strongly shewn, than in discontinuing and discrediting them.³⁸

³⁷ Thus, to make a saint of a worthy bishop of Hereford, who died 1282, a catalogue of 429 miracles alleged to have been wrought by his merits, was produced. These were approved of by the Pope, and recorded in his act of canonization. Al. Butler's Saints, v. 10. p. 51.

³⁸ One of the practices which have been exhibited in Catholic mo-

BOOK
VII.ANGLO-
NORMAN
MONASTE-
RIES,
FRANCIS-
CAN

To enumerate those of their pious countrymen, which our misguided forefathers chose to repeat and credit, would be unprofitable now. We may let them rest in the oblivion to which time and our reason have consigned them, and keep steady to the safest principle on this deluding subject, which admits no miracles to have occurred, but such as attended and attested missions of the expressly-sent and authorized messengers of the Deity to man — Moses and the Prophets — our Saviour and his Apostles. As these were the true instances of such characters, so they impose the protecting limit of our conscientious belief. It is only for us not to let the abuse drive

nasteries and seminaries, as indications of the great sanctity of the individual actor, has been, an apparent suspension in the air without any visible ropes or material means: a female saint has so appeared to be at Rome since 1820, as I am informed by an intelligent member of their church, whose friend declared he had passed his hand round her; and who has mentioned to me other instances in monastic biographies. I have been at a loss how to account for this by natural causes, if the narrative *was true*. But a communication from India in the *Missionary Register* for December 1829, shews that such a suspension is also a Thibet act of penance, and therefore, however extraordinary, is a power of self-elevation, which is attainable by persevering practice. Mr. Barænbruck from Mayaveram, mentions of one Sibadumnaben, a worshipper of Vishnoo, of the high rajah caste, that he visited the saints of the mountains at Thibet, and learnt their igochams or penances. One of these was called 'Vaju Stambana,' or, 'Wind Igocham:' it consisted of '*raising the body in a sitting position, one, two, and sometimes five feet from the ground by suppressing respiration.*' What could be learnt at Thibet, might be acquired by ingenious practice at Rome, and in the Catholic monasteries.

The other penances in Thibet which this person described himself to have gone thro *are scarcely credible*; but if true, shew what the human body may be made to endure and practise. The Adan penance was to sit on the ground from 5 to 10 days, with the feet tied to the back, and drawing no breath from 16 to 32 minutes. This was the first stage of their practice; a further advance was to suspend breathing for 48 minutes, and a still greater perfection made this 64 minutes, but many perished in attempting this process. The Salestambana penance was to keep the body one or two hours under water, and by much practice, longer: and the Irajah was to sit without respiration for an hour with the hands bent back. To accomplish these, they lived for several days without any food, except a little milk or herbs. Miss. Reg. 1829, p. 559. These feats shew us that some of the austerities of the Catholic saints of the middle ages, however extraordinary, were not at all supernatural. The attenuation of the body by fasting may have assisted their performance of these unnatural feats.

our minds to the opposite extreme. The pendulum of thought, because loosened from one folly, need not vibrate in the spring of its liberation to others as misleading. The miracles that have accompanied divine revelation, have nothing to do with the fanaticism or impostures that have since sought their own ends by delusive imitations. We now know what nature does without miraculous agency ; and we ascribe the awful interposition only to the express interference of the Deity on his own grand occasions. A miracle is not a violation of the laws of nature. It might as well have been called a peacock or a philosopher. All the laws of nature are, in that sense, in constant violation or counteraction without miracles resulting. The universal system of nature is built on the principle of law opposing law ; and the most powerful and beautiful results are obtained by this unceasing collision and finely harmonized opposition. A miracle is an act performed by divine agency ; by that agency which has made, and is ever governing all the laws of nature, and which therefore is its most sovereign law. Nature daily attests the operation of this guiding and preserving agency in the general course of things ; and the same history which gives us the evidence of what the course of nature was before we were individually born, also records the revelations which its Author has himself chosen to make to man ; and his own attestations of his accompanying agency in those commandings of it, which gave authority to his messengers, and displayed his divine warrant to their mission.³⁹

CHAP.
II.

CAN AND
DOMINI-
CAN PER-
SECU-
TIONS, ETC.

³⁹ NOTE,

ON THE PROFANE FESTIVALS AND CUSTOMS CONTINUED
UNDER CHRISTIANITY.

We may infer the inevitable corruption of practical Christianity in the middle ages, from the obstinate attachment of the converted barbarians to their ancient Pagan customs, and the allowed continuance of

BOOK
VII.

ANGLO-
NORMAN
MONASTE-
RIES,
FRANCIS-
CAN

many by the Catholic clergy. Boniface complained of German priests, who would continue, altho Christians, to sacrifice bulls and goats to the heathen idols. Mag. Bib. vol. 16. p. 113. The Pope, in answer to Boniface's rebuke, for permitting Pagan practices at Rome on new-year's day, in the eighth century, only remarks, that they are detestable, and that he will take care not to attend them; but does not, because he could not, suppress them. Ib. p. 117.—We find from other writers, that about the beginning of every year, it was a favorite and general custom to dress themselves like wild beasts, some like mares, and some like female deer, others like male animals, for the worst purposes. Some put on the entire skin of the beast they meant to represent; some only the head; and thus, pretending to be transformed into the animal, they acted like it, practising what one writer calls '*sordidissimam turpitudinem*,' and another, '*nefanda et ridiculosa*.' See Du Cange, Gloss. voc. Cervula.

At midsummer, they celebrated the summer solstice with customs that are called '*dæmonium ludos et nefandas salutationes*.'—Du Cange, voc. Caraula.

The wiser clergy certainly attempted to suppress these abominations; but, rather than lose their strange proselytes, they appointed some of their own festivals to be celebrated at the same time, and much in the same manner, in order to be equally attractive; as we have remarked of Gregory in our own island. (See before, p. 40.) The result of this seems to have been a worse corruption; for the clergy then joined in the Pagan immoralities, and connected them with Christianity. Hence the feast of the Hypodiaconi, the Sub-deacons, Sou-diacres, which was soon, from the fact, converted into a pun, to mean also Diacres Saouls, or the drunken deacons.

From Beletus, who lived in 1182, we find that this festum Hypodiaconorum, called also the Feast of Fools (*stultorum*), was celebrated by some on new-year's day, by some on twelfth-day, by some the week following. He says that laymen appeared with the monastic tonsure; and that some put on episcopal garments, to represent bishops. One was made the chief prelate, on whom every thing that was ludicrous was practised. The elections, the promotions, and the consecration of the bishops and the sacerdotal order, were treated with insult, attacks, and acute abuse. These licentious festivities were called the December Liberties, and seem to have been begun at one of the most solemn seasons of the Christian year, and to have lasted thro the chief part of January. Beletus remarks, that bishops and archbishops themselves joined with their inferiors in the sport. We find it prevailing even in one of the chief metropolitan cities of France; for he adds, 'Tho the great churches, like that of Rheims, observe this custom, it would seem to be more laudable that it should not indulge such sports.' Du Cange, voc. Kalendæ.

In 1444 we find it still in France, tho then discountenanced, and thus described: 'The priests and clergy create an archbishop or a bishop, or a pope, of fools, and so call him. Putting on faces of monsters, in the time of his celebrating the divine office, or, clothed like women or minstrels, they begin dances, sing abominable songs, eat rich puddings on the corner of the altar, near where mass is celebrating, play at dice there, incense it with a fœtid smoke of burnt old shoes, and run leaping about over all the church.' Ib.—That this immoral folly was practised in England, is indicated by the inventory of the York Monastery, taken so lately as in 1530, containing even then a small mitre, with pebblestones, for the bishop of the boys; also a ring for him, and two archys, one in the middle, like a cross, &c. Du Cange, ib.—The Council at Paris, in

1209, forbade archbishops to attend the Feast of Fools. Du Pin, Eccl. Hist. 13th cent.

In the *Gemma Animæ* it is confessed, that the processions with lighted tapers on the Purification of the Virgin, was adopted from the custom of the Pagans, who in the same month always went round their cities with lights. Honor. August. ap. Bib. Pat. vol. 10. p. 1266.—He also states, that on the festival of St. Blaise, the faithful burnt lights for their houses or animals, because an old woman having entered his prison with a light and some food, he told her, that after his death if she burnt a candle to his memory, and gave alms, she should never want. From her the custom spread thro all the church. Ib. p. 1266.

The feast of St. Peter ad Vincula was instituted to supersede a splendid Pagan festival, celebrated every year on that day, to commemorate the victory of Augustus over Antony at Actium. Du Cange, p. 401.—It could be only by rivalling the Pagan revelries, that the Christian ceremonies could gain the ascendancy.

The feast of St. Peter epularum was a competition with another heathen celebration. On that day of February, the Pagans brought banquets to the tombs of their parents, which they believed that dæmons or wandering souls consumed at night. Christianity, unable to suppress the custom, compounded with it, by giving it a Christian name and dress. Du Cange, Gloss. vol. 2. p. 401.

The most absurd of these feasts, and which, as if intended to be a complete burlesque on Christianity, was celebrated on the birth-day of our Saviour, was the Feast of Asses. Du Cange gives a list of all the lessons and hymns which were read and chanted in mock devotion on this occasion, p. 402.—Mr. Millin has given an account of it, from the Missal composed by an archbishop of Sens, who died in 1222; which has been thus abstracted:—

‘On the eve of the day appointed to celebrate it, before the beginning of vespers, the clergy went in procession to the door of the cathedral, where were two choristers singing in a minor key, or rather with squeaking voices,

*Lux hodie, lux letitiæ, me iudice, tristis
Quisquis erit, removendus erit, solemnibus istis.
Sicut hodie, procul invidiæ, procul omnia mœsta,
Læta volunt, quicumque celebret Asinaria Festa.*

Light to-day, the light of joy—I banish every sorrow;
Wherever found, be it expell’d from our solemnities to-morrow.
Away be strife and grief and care, from ev’ry anxious breast;
And all be joy and glee in those who keep the Ass’s Feast.

‘After this anthem, two canons were deputed to fetch the Ass, and to conduct him to the table, which was the place where the great chanter sat, to read the order of the ceremonies, and the names of those who were to take any part in them. The animal was clad with precious priestly ornaments, and in this array was solemnly conducted to the middle of the choir; during which procession, the following hymn was sung in a major key. The first and last stanzas of it were,

*Orientis partibus
Adventabit asinus,
Pulcher et fortissimus,
Sarcinis aptissimus
Hez, Sire Ane, Hez! &c. &c.*

BOOK
VII.

ANGLO-
NORMAN
MONASTE-
RIES,
FRANCIS-
CAN AND
DOMINI-
CAN PER-
SECU-
TIONS, ETC.

Amen dicas, asine!
Jam satias de gramine.
Amen; Amen; itera
Aspernare vetera.
Hez, Sire Ane, Hez!

These have been thus Englished:

From the country of the East
Came this strong and handsome beast,
This able Ass—beyond compare,
Heavy loads and packs to bear.

Huzza, Seignior Ass, Huzza!

Amen! bray, most honor'd Ass,
Sated now with grain and grass:
Amen repeat, Amen reply,
And disregard antiquity.

Huzza, Seignior Ass, Huzza!

' After this the office began by an anthem in the same style, sun-
posely in the most discordant manner possible. The office itself
the whole of the night, and part of the next day: it was a rhaps-
whatever was sung in the course of the year at the appropriated fes-
forming altogether the strangest and most ridiculous medley that c-
conceived. As it was natural to suppose that the choristers and the
gregation should feel thirst, in so long a performance, wine was
buted in no sparing manner. The signal for that part of the cere-
was an anthem, commencing, *Conductos ad poculum, &c.* (Brou-
the glass, &c.)

' The first evening, after vespers, the grand chanter of Sens b-
the jolly band in the streets, preceded by an enormous lantern. A
theatre was prepared for their reception before the church, where
performed not the most decent interludes. The singing and dancing
concluded by throwing a pail of water on the head of the grand ch-
They then returned to the church, to begin the morning office; a-
that occasion, several received on their naked bodies a number of pe-
water. At the respective divisions of the service, great care was tak-
supply the Ass with drink and provender. In the middle of it, a
was given by an anthem, *Conductus ad ludos, &c.* (Brought to play,
and the Ass was conducted into the nave of the church, where the pe-
mixed with the clergy, danced round him, and strove to imitate his
ing. When the dancing was over, the Ass was brought again into
choir, where the clergy terminated the festival.

' The vespers of the second day concluded with an invitation to
ner, in the form of an anthem like the rest, *Conductus ad prandium*
(Brought to dinner, &c.) And the festival ended by a repetition of si-
theatricals to those which had taken place the day before.'

How much these licentious absurdities must have diminished the n-
uses and influence of Christianity, especially when the priesthood
was part of the actors, may be easily conceived.—It is probable th-
these festivals we see some of the most ancient idolatrous rites.

C H A P. III.

*History of the principal Attacks on Papal Christianity,
from the Eighth Century to the Fourteenth.*

THAT the papal system of Christianity, however jealously guarded by self-interest, and supported by the united forces of the executive government, and the great wealth of the ecclesiastical bodies, would not enjoy the stable continuity to which it aspired, might have been anticipated, if the great truth had then been known or attended to, that whatever obstructs the improvement of human nature, must ultimately be overthrown by the energies of its improving principle. As the fourteenth century evolved, this form of Christianity had effected, at least in England, all the good of which it was capable: and its alteration became necessary to human progress. The opposing agencies which its original imperfections had first excited into activity, the vices of its maturity now raised into vigorous and unceasing operation; and it fell before their hostilities, as soon as the mind of society had been sufficiently educated to be bettered by its departure.

CHAP.
III.

The difficulty to be provided for in all great changes is, that while the evil is removing, the good should not be lost, which all old systems possess. The fervent belief of Christianity was a good not easy to be reproduced if once destroyed. Its genuine doctrines and precepts were so many attained points of sacred knowledge, for which, if once expelled from the human thought, there was no substitute to be supplied; and

BOOK
VII.HISTORY
OF RELI-
GION IN
ENGLAND.

yet the false opinions had been so long and so much identified with the true, that to abolish the one, was inevitably to shake the other. This danger upheld papal Christianity, till it became so incompatible with human improvement, that its continuance was as mischievous as any evils that could follow from its overthrow. And by that time other agencies became applicable, which would tend to diminish the mischiefs that might have followed. Till these agencies were ready, the first efforts to reform were suffered to be unsuccessful. But when all the springs and checks were duly organized to make the resulting consequences beneficial, the abolition of the papal system took place in every country, that could be benefited by its downfall; and its melioration was procured in every other. England, never inferior to any country in any path of improvement, was among the first that was emancipated. We will attempt to mark the leading causes of this momentous event: and of these, the rise of opposing opinions, usually called Heresies, may be first considered.

The history of heresies is indeed often the history of error; but it is also the history, always of the activity, and sometimes of the progress, of the human intellect. Tho frequently the product of a restless spirit, acting with injudicious eccentricity; yet their aim is at improvement. Their inventors may deviate into new errors, in their bold attempts to remove old ones; and have frequently abandoned what is good, in a vain search after something better; but they usually originate from the common sense of mankind perceiving what is wrong in existing things, and wishing to remove it. It is, however, easier to observe an impropriety, than to discern its proper cure: the

imperfect state of social mind which fosters the defect, prevents even the reformer's intellect from being competent to amend it. In the effort to improve, some new mistake is brought forth to supersede the old one. Imagination is more agile than judgment, and feeling always precedes knowledge. Hence, an old prejudice is frequently attacked by a young absurdity. But the infant folly is more mortal than the veteran error; and the new combinations of thought which appear in new heresies, or soon accompany them, occasion many minds to meditate more liberally and more usefully on its previous stores. The discussions which follow, increase the activity of the intellects which they interest, extend their researches, and sharpen their discrimination. Better feelings and juster views of truth arise, even among the supporters of the existing systems; and, when the vindictive agitation of disturbed habits and endangered interests has subsided, tho the innovation be repressed, yet it has urged the social mind to considerable advances, by the investigation which it has provoked, and by the consequences which it has occasioned. It will not be consistent with the object of this Work to detail the various heresies which occurred, or to trace their effects; it will be only necessary to give a connected outline of those more important criticisms and attacks, from which the Roman hierarchy appears to have chiefly suffered.

The occupation of the Western regions of the Roman Empire by the German and Scandinavian barbarians, long prevented any revival of the useless disputes already noticed. They knew nothing, and at first cared nothing, about mind, spirit, or form, or the mode or nature of the Sovereign existence. They

CHAP.

III.

ATTACKS
ON PAPAL
CHRISTI-
ANITY.

BOOK
VII.HISTORY
OF RELI-
GION IN
ENGLAND.Influence
of Moha-
medanism
on Chris-
tianity.

saw a wooden cross, or a painted figure, or a mouldering bone, and they prostrated themselves before it when desired, in willing and ignorant adoration. They had done so to their Thor and Odin, and to their Irminsul. There was no reason that they should be more difficult under their new discipline. The exorcism of their Christian priest was as natural to them, as their ancient runæ and sorceries of their forefathers; and they believed with all the force of an inherited and contented faith the analogous superstitions, perhaps more pleasing for their new dress, to which they were invited by the Christian missionaries.

The progress of the Arabian imposture first disturbed the deep serene in which both the priests and the people were, with equal sincerity, because with equal ignorance and with equal satisfaction, reposing. From the hour of its portentous birth, Mohamedanism, notwithstanding its own absurdities, was the unceasing censor of perverted Christianity. Based upon its leading tenets of the unity of the Divine nature; sincere in its devotion, simple in its worship; averse to the complicated mechanism of a gorgeous hierarchy; and emerging into existence and power, when the divine lessons of the Messiah were forgotten amid theological contentions, the veneration of images, the adoration of the cross, the invocations of saints, the deification of the Virgin, and the popularity of legends and relics; it fiercely accused the Christian world of idolatry and infidelity; of folly, superstition, and imposture. It had retained some valuable truths of the patriarchal theism; and so far was fitly corrective of corrupted Christianity, which, by its saints and Virgin, its relics, legends, and traditions, had begun to supersede the Deity, the Scrip-

tures, and our Saviour. It was indeed impossible that the Islam religion, so void of ornament, art, and machinery; so boastful of its superiority and simplicity; and so resolutely hostile to idolatry in every shape; could stand so long triumphantly prominent to the eye of the wondering world, which was practising in its worship almost all that the new critics condemned, without exciting a comparison and censure of the gorgeous superstitions. Even the wild fables of Mohamed, which the meanest Christian could deride, had the good effect of contributing to make other legends ridiculous. That the Mussulman doctrines interested the curious in Europe, we know by the fact, that a French abbot, the friend of St. Bernard, translated the Koran in the twelfth century. The prohibition of Christians serving in Saracen ships, implies that the aversion to intercourse was lessening between the individuals of the two religions; and for the Pope to forbid Saracens having Christian slaves, and to order Saracens to pay tithes,¹ indicates that Saracens were living in Christian countries where the papal orders had force. But the wars and commerce between these two great classes of mankind, their mutual captives and travellers, produced sufficient communication to put the mind of each into a state of operation on the other; especially on a point like that of religion, on which they were so greatly contrasted. It was at least a chronological coincidence, that, after Mohamedanism had been established in Asia, Africa, and Spain; and after the crusades and other intercourse had brought it fully to the consideration of Europe; reforming opinions abounded in its vicinity, and rapidly spread;

CHAP.
III.

ATTACKS
ON PAPAL
CHRISTI-
ANITY.

¹ Hoveden, p. 583; and Du Pin, Eccl. Hist. 13th cent. p. 35.

BOOK
VII.HISTORY
OF RELI-
GION IN
ENGLAND.


and a strong dissatisfaction arose at the wealth, pomp, and luxury, of the papal hierarchy. The sciences cultivated by the Spanish Arabs, drew inquisitive men from all parts of Europe to their cities and schools; and these were among the foremost in diffusing new ideas among their contemporaries. Gerbert, one of these students, in the tenth century was bold enough to call the Pope the Anti-Christ.² It was from the schools in France which he had planted, that Berengarius arose, who attacked transubstantiation in the succeeding age. The schoolmen, whose inquiries roused the mind of Europe into discussions that never ceased, till Wicliffe appeared, chiefly originated from the studies of the Arabian metaphysics; and Leo, the imperial Iconoclast, was urged to his resolution of destroying the images in the Christian churches, by a native of the country which the Saracens were occupying.³ It is the object of this History to be impartial in its narrations, and, if possible, correct in its judgments; and it is with a desire to be so, and not with any wish to apologize for ambitious imposture, that we intimate, that Mohamed, like all great men, did not live without producing much good, as well as much evil: But he has certainly contributed beyond every other agent, except the Christian teachers, to the checking, and in many regions to the overthrow, of idolatry in the world. His system, altho made the antagonist of Christianity, both by himself and his successors, planted firmly in a large portion of the Asiatic and African mind, the

² See 4th vol. of this Hist. p. 377, note.

³ One Besor, a Syrian, Jones's Hist. Waldenses, p. 254.—Mr. Gibbon justly remarks of Leo, 'His education, his reason, perhaps his intercourse with the Jews and Arabs, had inspired the martial peasant with an hatred of images.' Hist. vol. 5. c. 49. p. 97.

belief of the existence of the Deity, of his certain providence, and of his actual government of human affairs. It has kept mankind, where it has spread, from all Mexican, Carthaginian, Canaanitish, Cytherean, and Bacchian abominations. The sincere Mohametan is a nobler character than the votary of the horrors and depravities practised under these systems, that have all been popular, could have been. Mohamedanism is, indeed, but a confusing twilight, compared with Christianity, from which, and from ancient patriarchal tradition, it has borrowed all its good; but it is better than Paganism or Atheism, and has greatly assisted to keep the world from both. From the imposture of its founder, it is connected with an impious falsehood; and the sacred Koran abounds with much that is contrary to just history, to reason, to virtue, and to divine truth. Its views of the future world are degrading; and as it cannot subsist with knowledge and improved intellect, it most steadily discourages them. Its benefits are therefore now nullified by its evils, and it is visibly decaying both in power and diffusion; and even that popular estimation and enthusiasm, which once gave it wings and might, are fast departing from it.

That the establishment of the Mohamedans in Spain had a direct effect on the minds of many of the Spanish Christians, cannot be doubted. Under their protection, the Jews in Spain boldly attacked Christianity.⁴ Two bishops there contended, in the Nestorian and Mussulman spirit, that our Saviour

CHAP.
III.
ATTACKS
ON PAPAL
CHRISTI-
ANITY.

⁴ Julian, the archbishop of Toledo, in his book against the Jews, addressed to king Erugius, about 686, says, that they had caused many 'titubare e fidelium numero.' p. 116. Hence he composed his work to preserve Christianity from the 'rabidis Judæorum latratibus.' He says they disputed the chronology of the advent 'cancerosis sermonibus,' and maintained that the Messiah *was* to come.

BOOK
VII.HISTORY
OF RELI-
GION IN
ENGLAND.

was not the true, but the adopted, Son of God ;⁵ and their opinions spread extensively around them.⁶ It was a Spaniard, a disciple of one of these bishops, in the ninth century, Claude, who made a formidable attack, not only on the images and saints of the Catholic church, but on the Pope himself and his sacerdotal authority. Going to Turin, on being appointed its bishop, he found the churches there full of images, that were worshipped as Jupiter had been ; and he fearlessly threw them down, tho with great personal hazard, from the opposition of the popular feelings.⁷ He declared, that the relics and bones of saints were not more entitled to reverence, than bones of cattle or pieces of wood.⁸ He opposed the superstitious veneration of the cross ; disapproved of pilgrimages to Rome ; and even ventured to hint, that he was not to be called an apostle who sat in the apostolic chair, but the person who fulfilled apostolic duties.⁹ He was eagerly and repeatedly opposed ;¹⁰

⁵ These were, Felix bishop of Urgal, and Eliphand of Toledo. They were opposed by Paulus, the prelate of Aquileia, about 800, in two works, printed in Mag. Bib. t. 4. pars 1. p. 351, and pars 2. p. 1 ;—and by Beatus and Etherius, in Asturia, whose answer is in the same collection, pp. 462–568.

⁶ Etherius says, that the work of Elipandus ‘ per publicum in diversis terrarum vulgati sunt partibus.’ p. 529.

⁷ Claude, in his letter to Theodemir, says, ‘ Appointed bishop by Louis, I came to Turin. I found all the churches full of the filth of abomination, and images ; and because I alone began to destroy what all worshipped, all mouths opened against me.’ Mag. Bib. t. 4. pars 2. p. 149.—He said, ‘ If Christians venerate the images of saints, they have not abandoned idols, but only changed their names. If you inscribe on the walls, or paint images of Peter and Paul, instead of Jupiter and Saturn,’ &c. &c. Ib.

⁸ His letter to Theodemir is printed in the Mag. Bib. Pat. t. 4. pars 2.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ One of his ablest opponents was Dungal, an Irishman, who went to France to instruct Charlemagne and his people. See his treatise, one of the best defences of image worship, Mag. Bib. Pat. t. 4. pars 2. pp. 145–199.

and, tho his opinions made great individual impression, they accomplished no public reformation; but they enlightened the mind of many, who cherished in secret, and transmitted in confidence, his valuable doctrines.

What Claude of Turin failed to accomplish, was attempted in the twelfth century by those persons who, under various names, of which the most celebrated were the Albigenses and the Waldenses, the Cathari and the Paterini, at the very period when the predominance of the papal monarchy seemed to be most firmly established in Europe, began to prepare the human mind to overthrow it. This great and beneficial change originated, as usual, from the humblest source, and was made principally operative by the severity of persecution. It had also an original connexion, both in locality and intercourse, with the Arabian conquests.

A remnant of Manicheans, who believed the existence of an evil as well as a good principle, had survived in Armenia, little known and of small importance, till the Arabian fanatics had become the masters of Syria. It was in 639 that they had completed their conquest of this province; and about the year 653, an obscure Armenian, named Constantine, was living at the city of Mananalis, when a deacon, who had been a prisoner among the Saracens, in Syria, having obtained his release, was returning home thro this city. He was kindly received by Constantine, and entertained some days at his house. To requite the hospitality of the generous stranger, he gave him two manuscripts, which he had brought out of Syria—the Gospels, and the Epistles of

CHAP.
III.

ATTACKS
ON PAPAL
CHRISTI-
ANITY.

Paulicians
in Arme-
nia; 653.

BOOK
VII.HISTORY
OF RELI-
GION IN
ENGLAND.

St. Paul.¹¹ From this present, we may infer, that the disposition of the traveller was religious, and that their conversation was upon corresponding subjects. The successes of the Arabian zealots, who had then added Persia and Ægypt to their dominions, were astonishing the world, and were, together with their new faith, pretensions, and systems, the subject, every where, of conversation. The guest of Constantine must, during his captivity, have heard much of the coarse invectives of the Saracens against the Christian superstitions, for it was the favorite topic of Arab eloquence and zeal, on their first irruptions; and that his conversation and present had effects of this sort on the mind of Constantine is evident, for he became afterwards determined to touch no books but the Gospels and St. Paul, and to become himself a teacher of the opinions very opposite to those of the Grecian hierarchy. He threw away his Manichean library; he exploded and rejected many of the absurd notions of his countrymen, and led them to abandon their former teachers whom they had most venerated, even Manes himself. But he also attacked the superstitions of the Greek church. He quitted Mananalis for Cibossa, and lived there twenty-seven years, spreading his opinions around.¹²

The Grecian emperor hearing of his progress, sent Simeon, one of his courtiers, to have him stoned, and his disciples dispersed. The issue of this persecution was, that Simeon himself became a convert, and

¹¹ We derive this account from Petrus Siculus, who went from the emperor Basil the Great, to the Paulicians in Armenia, in 870, to negotiate for an exchange of prisoners. See his *Historia*, in the *Bib. Mag. Pat.* vol. 16. pp. 814-825.

¹² Petrus Siculus, pp. 820, 821.

three years afterwards went to Cibossa, and became the successor to Constantine in diffusing his obnoxious opinions. Justinian, the emperor, better known for his jurisprudence than for his humanity, ordered all these heretics to be seized and burnt. This cruel order was executed. As many as were ascertained and could be collected, were massed together in an immense pile, and consumed, excepting Paulus, an *Arabian*,¹³ and his two sons, whom he had carefully imbued with his opinions. One of these was sent to Constantinople, and questioned by the patriarch, "Why he denied the orthodox faith? why he did not *adore* the venerated cross? why he did not worship and adore the holy mother of God? why he did not partake the transubstantiated eucharist? why he abandoned the catholic and apostolic church?" Escaping from the patriarch, he went to Epiparis, and collecting all those who were of the same opinions with himself, fled to Mananalis, their metropolis, then in the power of the Saracens, and under their protection lived and flourished above thirty years.¹⁴ His disciples not only increased there under the name of Paulicians, but spread into Phrygia and other parts.¹⁵ The imperial government fiercely persecuted them in its own dominions;¹⁶ and the empress Theodora is declared by her friends to have extirpated 100,000 of these people, "by the sword, the gibbet, or the flames."¹⁷

The great instrument of their multiplication was still the Gospels. It was by putting these into the

¹³ Præter Paulum quondam genere Arabem. Pet. Sic. p. 821.

¹⁴ Pet. Sic. p. 822.

¹⁵ Ib.—It was urged to them as a reproach, that many of them were sprung from Saracens, 'ex Saracenis genus ducere.'

¹⁶ Pet. Sic. 824.

¹⁷ Gibb. Hist. vol. 5. c. 54. p. 527.

BOOK
VII.HISTORY
OF RELI-
GION IN
ENGLAND.Paulicians
emigrate
to Europe.

hands of Sergius, afterwards one of the great propagators of their opinions, that an aged woman converted him.¹⁸ The importance of his conversion we may estimate by reading, that for thirty-four years he occupied himself in spreading his new evangelical truths thro every city and province he could reach.¹⁹ His efforts were so successful, that he was thought to be the precursor of Anti-Christ, and to be producing the great apostasy foretold by St. Paul.²⁰ The murders encouraged by Theodora roused the surviving Paulicians to more stern resistance. Carbeas extended the region of their residence, built Tephrice, near the mountains of Trebizond, and with the aid of the Saracens maintained a fierce war with the Grecian emperors, which his successor continued.²¹ But their minute history need not be pursued. It is agreed by the best historians, that they were transplanted into Thrace,²² that they penetrated Bulgaria,²³ that they

¹⁸ So says their fierce enemy, Petrus Siculus: 'She, diaboli sectatrix, thus addressed the young man: 'I hear, sir, that you excel in literature and erudition, and are besides, in every respect, a good man; tell me then, why do you not read the sacred Gospels?' He answered, '*It is not lawful* for us, profane persons, to read them, but for priests only.' 'Not so,' she replied, 'there is no acceptance of persons with God; he wishes that all men should be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth. But your priests, because they adulterate the word of God, do not read all to you.' &c. She then repeated to him various passages; he took the Gospels, examined them; 'Evangelii codicem evolvit,' and became a Paulician.' Pet. Sic. pp. 822, 823.

¹⁹ His own words are, 'From the East to the West, and from the North to the South, have I been proclaiming the Gospel, and laboring on my knees.' Pet. Sic. 823.

²⁰ Petrus, with the usual acerbity and folly of all political and religious controversy, and from which the literary mind has not yet emancipated itself, not only mentions this absurd charge, but also calls him the *lupus sub ovina pelle*; the *diabola maximus propugnator*; the *virtutum fraudulentis simulator*; the *inimicus crucis Christi*; the *os impietatis*; the *Christi osor*; *nequitie architecta*, &c. Pet. Sic. 822, 823, 824. All which epithets have only one meaning,—that he taught with great effect.

²¹ Pet. Sic. 825. Gibb. pp. 528, 529.

²² Gibb. pp. 530-533.

²³ Pet. Sic. p. 814.—On these Paulicians the English reader may refer to Mosheim's *Ecc. Hist.* vol. 2. pp. 185 and 362. 431. Coote's ed.; and

were introduced into Italy and France. and, under various names, of which the Albigenses is the most prominent, spread thro Europe.²⁴ It was in the eleventh century that, being again attacked in Thrace, they migrated into Lombardy, France, and Germany.²⁵ Their progress, conduct and opinions here, have been fully described by their new papal opponents.

It was about the year 1150,²⁶ that several parts of the Continent had become pervaded by men, chiefly of the poorer and laborious classes of life,²⁷ who were forming themselves into little religious communities, distinct from the established Catholic church,²⁸ and who had the Scriptures with them in their vernacular languages,²⁹ and were intently and critically

CHAP.
III.

ATTACKS
ON PAPAL
CHARITY.

1150.
Albigenses; Wal-
denses; Cathari,
&c.

Jones's History of the Waldenses, pp. 277-280. I feel less difficulty than Mr. Jones does, in believing that the Paulicians had many absurd as well as valuable opinions, because such was the character of the age.

²⁴ Mariana says, that a writer, 'clarus eruditione,' was of opinion, that the Albigenses entered France out of Spain. Mag. Bib. t. 4. pars 2. p. 581. He states, that their doctrines pervaded part of Spain, and were taught at Leon. Ib. It is not unlikely, that as the Paulicians had been nursed among the Saracens in Asia, some of their emigrations took shelter in Saracen Spain.

²⁵ See Mosheim, p. 580.

²⁶ Eckbert, who flourished in 1160, tells the bishop of Cologne, that the Cathari were frequently met in his diocese. He adds, that when he was canon at Bonn, he often disputed with them.—See his Dedic. to his Sermones, 4 Mag. Bib. pars 2. p. 78.

²⁷ Reiner, who wrote in the thirteenth century, and had been one of their fraternity, remarks of them, 'Vivunt de labore, ut opifices; doctores etiam ipsorum sunt sutores et textores.' Contr. Wald. c. 7. p. 765.—He makes this their reproach, 'We have philosophers, literati and princes; they only pauperes et opifici, mulieres et idiotæ.' Ib. 747.

²⁸ Eckbert states, that they declared the true faith and worship of Christ was to be found 'no where but in their conventicles, which they held in cellars and weaving manufactories, and in subterraneous places of this sort.' p. 79.

²⁹ Reiner adduces, as one of the main causes of their progress, that they had translated the Old and New Testament into their vulgar tongue. 'I have seen,' adds he, 'a rustic who could repeat all Job, word by word, and many who knew perfectly the New Testament,' p. 747.—It was their reproach to the Catholic clergy, 'It is rare to find a doctor among you, who knows by heart three chapters together of the New Testament; but we have scarcely any man or woman who cannot repeat it in their own language.' 766.

BOOK
VII.HISTORY
OF RELI-
GION IN
ENGLAND.

comparing³⁰ the tenets, system, and conduct of the papal clergy, with the precepts and instructions of the Evangelists and Apostles. They were universally diffused.³¹ In France, they were called Weavers, Poor of Lyons, Waldenses and Albigenses; in Flanders, Piphles; and in Germany, Cathari.³² They were at Bonn, and in the diocese of Cologne; they abounded near the Alps and Pyrenees; they were greatly diffused thro Provence and in Tholouse; they existed in Spain; and had spread thro Lombardy to Padua and Florence, and some had even entered Naples.³³ They were distinguished for their missionary spirit, and the caution with which they pursued it. They particularly studied to interest the great. One of their own fraternity, who had left them, thus describes their exertions: "They shew some merchandises, as rings or robes to lords and ladies, to buy. If they sell these, and are asked, 'Have you any more to sell?' the answer is, 'I have far more precious jewels than those, which I will give you if you will keep me secure, and not betray me to the clergy.' Safety being promised, 'I have a gem shining from God, by which man may know God; I have another so radiant, that it kindles the love of God in the heart that possesses it.' The travelling merchant then read some interesting chapter out of his vernacular gospels, and if he found his auditors pleased, he turned to the denunciations, 'Wo unto you who devour widows

³⁰ Reiner describes these comparisons, p. 766.—They even attended the churches and heard the sermons, but it was to criticise the preacher afterwards, p. 765.

³¹ So says Eckbert, in 1160: '*Ita per omnes terras multiplicati sunt, ut grande periculum patiat ecclesia Dei, a veneno pessimo quod undique adversus eam offendunt.*' p. 79.

³² Hos nostra Germania, Catharos; Flandria, Piphles; Gallia, Texerant, ab usu texendi appellant. Eck. b. 79.

³³ Reiner, p. 748.

houses,' &c. To the question, To whom must these menaces be applied? the answer was, 'To the monks and clergy.'"³⁴

CHAP.
III.

ATTACKS
ON PAPAL
CHRISTI-
ANITY.

The morals of these reformers are interestingly described: "They are steady, and modest in their manners; they have no ostentation in their dress; they neither use rich, nor sordid apparel; they decline commerce, from their aversion to lies, oaths, and fraud, but live by the labor of their hands; they do not amass wealth, but are contented with necessities; they are chaste, especially those of Lyons, and temperate; they do not frequent taverns, nor dances, nor other vanities; they refrain from anger; they are always working, learning, or teaching."³⁵

Their internal government consisted of a bishop, an elder, and a younger son, and deacons. On the death of a bishop, the elder son succeeded him, and the younger was advanced to be the elder. At a general assembly, a new younger son was chosen. Their bishop took the lead in the imposition of hands, breaking the bread, and beginning to pray; or if he were absent, the elder or the younger presided. It was the duty of the two sons to visit all the flock in their jurisdiction. The deacons heard confessions of venial sins once a month, gave absolutions, and appointed the penances of three days fasting, or a hundred genuflexions.³⁶

Their opinions betray that mixture of improving truth and continued absurdity, which was the unavoidable character of the mind at that period. They discredited purgatory;³⁷ they declared the Pope to be

³⁴ We derive this picture from Reiner, c. 8. p. 766; who says of himself, 'Ego frater Rinherus olim heresiarcha.' p. 746.

³⁵ Reiner, c. 7. p. 765.

³⁶ Ib. c. 6. p. 758.

³⁷ 'Secundus illi error, quod Deus nulli infert poenam purgatoriam quam penitus esse negant.' p. 757.

BOOK
VII.HISTORY
OF RELI-
GION IN
ENGLAND.

the head of errors; and his church, from its worldly pomp, to be the scarlet woman in the Revelation; they called him and his bishops homicides, from the wars they excited,³⁸ and despised his excommunications. They taught, that bishops and abbots ought not to have royal privileges; and that it was an evil to found and endow monasteries and churches. They contemned councils. They reprobated exorcisms, public penances, especially of women; clerical celibacy, extreme unction, the monastic tonsure, and Latin prayers. They declared all preaching to be fables, which could not be proved from the Bible. They derided ecclesiastical indulgencies, dispensations, and absolutions; the legends and relics of saints, and their canonizations, vigils, and worship. The numerous holidays of the Catholic system, their holy water, wax candles, consecrated oil, incense, splendid vestments, processions, pilgrimages, and other superstitions, they had in abhorrence. All images and pictures used in worship, they declared to be idolatry. They thought it better to feed the poor, than to adorn the churches; and they ventured to assert, that the Holy Scriptures had the same efficacy when translated into the vernacular tongue, as they possessed in their Latin form.³⁹ Yet if their opponents have not wickedly slandered them, a portion at least of those who were residing in the southern districts of France retained opinions and tenets which betray an Oriental origin.⁴⁰

³⁸ Reiner, 750.—'Quod Papa sit caput omnium errorum—quod Romana ecclesia sit meretrix in Apocalypsi propter superfluum ornatum—Quod Papa et omnes episcopi sunt homicidæ propter bella.' Ib.

³⁹ Reiner, 748–752.—They also declaimed against the worship of the Virgin Mary and the saints, and asserted that God alone was to be adored. pp. 768–790. One of their chief authors was John of Lyons, 'their great heresiarch,' says Reiner, 'from whose large book I have extracted these errors.' p. 762.

⁴⁰ The Troubadour Izarn, a Dominican monk, thus intimates some of

All their profession of new religious opinions have been too promiscuously blended together. But it seems just to make an important distinction in behalf of the Vaudois or Waldenses. They seem not to have had the objectionable opinions of the rest. Since the first edition of this History, I have met with a curious exposition of the religious opinions of the Vaudois, in one of their poems, called 'La nobla Leyczon,' or 'The noble Lesson,'⁴¹ which contains the date of its composition (the year 1100); and from which we may learn correctly their real doctrines. It is written in the language of the Troubadours, and shews that these people did not combine the Paulician or Manichean errors with their purer sentiments of Christianity, but had views and feelings of Christianity which formed the birth-day of its reformation, and would have done honor to Wickliffe, Luther, or any other of the great Reformers of the fifteenth century. The following analysis gives the substance of this composition:—

ANALYSIS OF LA NOBLA LEYCZON.

⁴¹ This poem is printed by M. Raynouard, from a MS. of the library at Geneva, compared with another MS. of it deposited by

their notions, in his quotations to one of them: 'Where do you find, in Scripture, that your soul has come from those who fell from heaven to earth, and *were nine days in falling*. We know what they have become; and how can you say that they will return to the glory which they have lost? The angel Lucifer drew them after him into the abyss, and from being beautiful and luminous, they became hideous and black. What appearance is there that my soul is one of them?'

'Tell me, again, what school taught you, that the human soul, on quitting the body, passes into an ox, a ram, a pig, a chicken, or into the first animal it meets with; and from this moves into others, until it re-appears in another man or woman? That it thus undergoes a long penance, awaiting the day of its final judgment?' St. Palay. v. 2. p. 62-4.—Thus Milton's description of the defeated angels, being nine days in falling from heaven, was an ancient idea of some of the Waldenses.

'Nine days they fell: confounded chaos roar'd,
And felt ten-fold confusion in their fall,
Thro her wild anarchy.'

Par. Lost, b. 6. v. 871.

CHAPTER
III.

ATTACKS
ON PAPAL
CHRISTI-
ANITY.

Religious
opinions
of the
Vaudois
in the year
1100.

BOOK
VII.HISTORY
OF RELI-
GION IN
ENGLAND.

Mr. Samuel Morland at Cambridge, in 1658. Morland had been sent by Cromwell to the Duke of Savoy, and wrote the 'History of the Evangelical Churches of the Valleys of Piedmont.'

It begins with stating, that the end of the world was then (anno 1100) approaching; and reminds us, that the day of judgment will follow, and proceeds thus:—

'God the Father, His glorious and dear Son, and the Holy Spirit;—these three, the Holy Trinity, ought to be honored as one God, full of all wisdom, and of all power, and of all goodness. We should implore it for aid against the world, the devil, and the flesh, and to give us wisdom, accompanied with goodness, that we may know the way of truth, and keep pure the soul which God has given us.

'We should also love our neighbour, not only him who has benefited, but him who has injured us, and have firm hope in the heavenly King.'

The poem then refers the origin of evil to the sin of Adam. 'Adam became an unbeliever in God his creator. Men became worse. They abandoned their Almighty Father, and turned to idols, which the law of nature, common to every people, had from the beginning forbidden. This law God placed in the heart of his first creature, with the liberty of doing good or evil. He wrote this noble law on the heart of every man;—that he should keep and teach rectitude; love God above all things, and fear and serve Him; preserve marriage, that noble pact, inviolate; have peace with his brethren; love every one; hate pride, and cultivate humility; and do to others as he desired to be done to himself.'

It then describes the corruption of mankind, and the deluge; gives a short sketch of the scripture history, to the return of the Jews to Jerusalem; and an account of our Saviour's nativity, and of the difference between the old and new law, especially on the subject of revenge and enmity; and adds,

'No one ought to kill or hate another. We should not despise either a child, a poor or a simple person, nor think contemptuously of the stranger who comes from another country; for in this world we are all pilgrims; we are all brethren, and ought all to serve God.'

The poem then describes our Saviour's miracles; mentions that 'He promised the heavenly kingdom to those who hold spiritual poverty, and spoke many beautiful parables, and narrates his death and resurrection, and the persecution of his disciples.'

From this topic it takes occasion to complain largely of the persecution which the Vaudois were then (an. 1100) suffering. On this point it says,

‘ There are some doctors who would shew the way of Jesus Christ, but they are so much persecuted, that they can scarcely do it. So much are the false Christians blinded by error, that they kill such as are better, and leave the false and deceitful in peace. But it is evident that they are not good shepherds, but love the sheep for the fleece.’ It then mentions the curious fact, that ‘ if there be any one who is good, and fears Jesus Christ ; who will neither curse, lie, nor swear ; nor be adulterous, nor kill, nor rob another, nor avenge himself, *they say he is a Vaudois*, and worthy to be punished, and by falsehood or deceit find accusation against him, and take from him what he has. But he that suffers for the honor of the Lord, strongly comforts himself ; because the kingdom of heaven is prepared for him after he has left this world, and then he will have great glory, if he has here endured dishonor.’

‘ From this, their wickedness is manifest, who tell a man that will lie and swear, lend at usury, kill, and be an adulterer, and seek revenge, that he is a man of honor, character and loyalty.’

It then complains of the ease with which men get absolution for money, or prayers for them, and promise of pardon ; tho all the bishops, abbots, cardinals and popes together, cannot pardon one single mortal sin. God only can forgive it.

He next teaches, that those who are pastors should preach to the people, and lead them to prayer, and feed them with the divine doctrine ; should urge them to repent, to confess, to be penitent, to fast and give alms, and to pray with a boiling heart. By these things the soul finds its salvation. We produce our evils by the desire of the eye, the pleasure of the flesh, and by the pride of life. If we would love and follow Jesus Christ, we must cherish a spiritual poverty of heart, love chastity, and serve God humbly. Thus we shall have the victory over our enemies.

He then briefly (breement) relates the three laws which the Deity has given to the world.

The first law shews to him, who has sense and reason, that he must know God, and honor Him as his Creator ; for he that possesses understanding, may think within himself that he neither formed himself nor others ; from this he may discern that it is a sovereign Deity who has framed the world. Thus recognizing Him, we should honor Him, as those who will not, must receive condemnation.

CHAP.
III.

ATTACKS
ON PAPAL
CHRISTIANITY.

BOOK
VII.HISTORY
OF RELI-
GION IN
ENGLAND.

The second law which was given to Moses, teaches us to adhere to God, and to obey Him firmly, for he will punish the offender.

The third law which now prevails, instructs us to love God with a pure heart, and to serve him purely. We need no other law, except to follow Jesus Christ, and to do His good pleasure, and to keep steadily what He has commanded.

It then notices the day of judgment, and the separation and doom of the wicked; and thus terminates,—‘May God give us to hear what He will say to his own, ‘Come you into it with me, O blessed of my Father! and possess the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world. Then you shall have delight, riches and honors.’ May it please the Lord, who formed the universe, that we should be among those chosen to stand in his court.’*—Raynouard’s Troubadours, 73–100.

These opinions claim for the Vaudois, a distinction from those who held doctrines less scriptural and rational. The pays de Vaud has been always distinguished, even to our own times, for a virtuous simplicity; and if all the other minds who perceived the errors and corruptions of the prevailing practice of the relaxing clergy, had confined their corrective opinions to the topics of ‘La nobla Leyczon,’ the papal hierarchy could not have withstood their attacks; their appeal to the reason of mankind would have been conclusive and irresistible, and the Protestant Reformation would have distinguished the twelfth or thirteenth century, as it afterwards immortalized the sixteenth. But these just and useful feelings were, by many other would-be reformers, combined with

* I add the original of the five last lines, as a specimen of the language and versification:—

Vene vos en au mi, beneit del mio payre!
A possessir lo regne aperelha a vos del començament del mont,
Al cal vos aure deleit, riquerzas e honors.
Placra ha aquel segnor, que forr:e tot lo mont,
Que nos siam de li esleit per istar en sa cort. p. 100.

other tenets and systems, which they had inherited from their Paulician ancestors and diffused around, as absurd, and in parts more pernicious, than the follies they attacked.⁴² And hence it became necessary, for the benefit of mankind, that they should themselves undergo a discipline which would separate the invaluable truths they had discovered and diffused, from the deleterious mistakes to which they were as much attached. The enmity of the hierarchy, whose downfall they projected, was permitted to be the instrument of their improvement. Their prosperity was interrupted, their numbers diminished, and the survivors scattered by an abominable persecution. Their good opinions were sifted, during their sufferings, from their errors; and grew up in other soils to a fruitful and noble harvest, which has at last filled Europe with purer Christianity, a more intellectual worship, and the departure, every day accelerated, of base and debilitating superstitions.⁴³

As their Paulician ancestors had incurred the hostilities of the Grecian hierarchy, so these Albigenes and Waldenses had to endure a persecution as ferocious from the Roman pontiff. In the cruel attack which nearly destroyed them in France, the English nation had acted a peculiar part. The crusade was commanded by our Simon de Montfort, earl of Leicester, and a large portion of the warlike missionaries were Englishmen.⁴⁴ But that this merciless massacre

⁴² The fullest account of the Paulician errors is given by Petrus Siculus, p. 814-822. They had commenced from the Manichees, whom St. Cyril Hierosolym. describes, Opera, pp. 56-61.

⁴³ The connexion between the Paulicians, Waldenses, and the Protestant Reformers, has been discussed vituperatively by the jesuit Gretzer, Prolegom. ap. Mag. Bib. vol. 4. p. 733; more candidly by Mosheim; and noticed by Gibbon, c. 54. pp. 534-536.

⁴⁴ See 1st vol. of this Hist. p. 442.

BOOK
VII.HISTORY
OF RELI-
GION IN
ENGLAND.

neither intimidated nor preserved England from an imitation of many of their heresies, will be seen in the following chapter. It is not improbable that some of the Albigenses visited our island.⁴⁵

The dispersion of this people had an important operation on the mind of Europe.⁴⁶ It was in France that they were so pitilessly massacred. But we know that they were also at that time at Viterbo, Verona, and in Hungary,⁴⁷ as well as at Cologne, in Flanders, and Bohemia. This murderous crusade against them, in which St. Dominic was active in a sacerdotal if not in a military capacity, occurred in France in the year 1210. But so far was this attack, tho purposely made unsparingly destructive, from extinguishing them, that we find it afterwards declared, that "in all the cities of Lombardy and Provence, and in other kingdoms and states, there are more schools of heretics than theologians, and many auditors who publicly dispute and convoke the people to solemn disputations. They preach in the forum, in houses, and in fields. None dare hinder them, from the power and multitude of their supporters.⁴⁸ We have an instance of their emigrating from Montpellier to Metz; and that the bishop could not disturb them in this latter city, because its great men protected them.⁴⁹ The

⁴⁵ That emigrants at this period came from Avignon to England, we have an instance in the Falcasius, or Fawkes, who defended the castle at Bedford against the regency of Henry III.

⁴⁶ Mr. Jones, in his Ecclesiastical History, has ably stated, tho not from original sources, yet from authorities which, as far as I have examined, I have found to correspond with them, the more detailed history of these interesting people.

⁴⁷ See Innocent the Third's letters, forbidding the magistrates at Viterbo to favor heretics; ordering the bishop of Verona to examine if those accused of heresy were guilty; and requesting the king of Hungary to expel heretics—in Dupin's Eccl. Hist. 13th cent.

⁴⁸ Reiner, ap. Mag. Bib. Pat. t. 4. pars 2. p. 748.

⁴⁹ Cesarius Hersterbacensis, who lived at the time of the great persecution, and describes it, thus mentions the origin of the heresy at Metz:—

author who mentions this fact, adds, that the opinions so rapidly spread as to infect a thousand cities, and that, if the swords of the faithful had not repressed them, they would have corrupted all Europe. As he wrote while the persecution raged, he thought it would annihilate them. The universal diffusion of their spirit and purified doctrines afterwards, proves that his first estimate of their prevalence was formed with more judgment than his prediction of their destruction.

CHAP.
III.

ATTACKS
ON PAPAL
CHRISTI-
ANITY.

It may be thought strange that the opinions of the Waldenses, some so just, should have sprung from a little corner of Armenia, and in the mind of a Manichæan. But, if we reflect, we shall perceive that it was more natural that new ones should begin in an outcast sect, on the borders of Mohamedanism, than in the Grecian established church. The individuals educated in that church, would from their infancy be so imbued with all its habits, feelings, and reasonings, that they would think in no other train. Nor had they the opportunity. We find from Petrus Siculus, that it was reckoned by the Greeks to be a profane thing, that any layman should read the Scriptures; and therefore Sergius was at first averse to consult them. But it was the comparison of the Scriptures with the system of the Grecian hierarchy,

He says it arose hoc modo: 'As the bishop was preaching in the church, seeing two men standing in the crowd, he exclaimed, 'I see among you two ministers of the devil, there they are,' shewing them with his finger, 'who were condemned for heresy in my presence, in Montpellier, and driven out of it.' They left the church, and a great multitude gathered round them, to whom they preached.' He says, the bishop could not use violence against them, because they were protected by some great man of the city, whom he had offended, by having excommunicated one of their relations for usury. They sowed the new opinions there. Ces. Herst. de Wald. p. 229.

BOOK
VII.HISTORY
OF RELI-
GION IN
ENGLAND.

which could alone check the imposing effects of habit, instruction, and worldly greatness. Yet if the Grecian priesthood were the persons who only had the power of making this comparison, they were also the most interested not to mark the contrast; and from their most venerated prepossessions, and from the personal consequence which they derived from the prevailing system, they were the least disposed to indulge criticisms, which would depreciate their knowledge and diminish their influence. Nor was the mere reading of the Scriptures altogether sufficient. The mind springs up rapidly in its improvements, but it needs a beginning impulse. The censures of the Mussulman zealots were precisely adapted to furnish the incipient suggestions. The Arabian preachers and the Grecian hierarchy were at essential warfare with each other: and in Syria, as Islamism was there triumphant, its criticisms would be most known. Hence, it was perfectly natural that a Christian, who had resided in Syria as a captive among the Mohamedans, should be the agent to rouse the mind of Constantine to new reasoning on Christianity. As an individual of a discountenanced sect, he would be prone to hear with attention whatever depreciated the established hierarchy. But when, in addition to this conversation, his guest presented him with a thing so rare and little known, as a manuscript of the Gospels, a new field of knowledge was suddenly opened to his excited mind. No seed will grow, unless sown on proper ground. The mind of Constantine was of that description. It is declared by his enemy, that he devoted himself wholly to the perusal of the Scriptures, and that he

threw off the absurdities taught by Manes, as well as awakened himself to perceive the errors of the established hierarchy. Unless all the circumstances had concurred, the result would not have taken place. His sectarian feeling; his obscure and humble dwelling, remote from the scenes of pomp and ambition; the visit from a traveller who had just quitted Mohamadan servitude; the sudden perusal at that juncture of the Scriptures; the possession of sufficient intellectual ability; and the depression of the power of the Greek hierarchy by the attacks of the Saracens; were all incidents necessary to coincide, before Constantine could himself attain to a perception of his new opinions, or could afterwards safely cherish and impart them. But, according to the reasoning expressed in the preceding chapter, the illumination of his mind, and of those whom he instructed, could only be partial. Much darkness and error must have accompanied it. This is stated to have been the fact. The Paulicians; like the Waldenses, taught great absurdities, as well as inestimable truths; and therefore, tho they were increased and spread around, they were also allowed to be persecuted, till they had roused or created wiser men in other countries, who, abandoning their mistakes, improved and circulated all their just reasoning and valuable discoveries.

But it is remarkable, that in Constantine, in Sergius, and in the Waldenses, the great instrument of human improvement was the possession and the circulation of the vernacular Scriptures. We shall find the same result in the history of Wicliffe. The discouragement of their perusal was necessary to the maintenance of perverted Christianity. Wherever they appeared, imposture trembled and declined; and moral

CHAP.

III.

ATTACKS
ON PAPAL
CHRISTI-
ANITY.

BOOK
VII.HISTORY
OF RELI-
GION IN
ENGLAND.Progress
of disbe-
lief, from
the 12th
century.

religion and rational piety gained the ascendancy in their stead.⁵⁰

It is clear, from the writers of those times, that as the twelfth century closed, altho the external fabric of the church seemed to be firmly consolidated, opposing opinions of all sorts were afloat, which were operating to undermine it. The doubting mind will not always limit its mistrust on religion; it tends in many to be the Pyrrhonist or the Epicurean. In the days of Anselm, atheism was trying to establish itself by metaphysical subtleties. His friends, who saw the evil spreading, and knew his powers, urged him to review and answer the new objections.⁵¹ In every

⁵⁰ Some of the Troubadours, in the wiser part of their lives, could indite moral lays. Thus Nat. de Mens expressed to his 'noble king:'

The world was made, this seems a truth,
For his advantage who is the most valuable;
But, according to natural reason,
Man is worth more than the rest;
For of all that exists,
Man is the lord and master.
He, then, cannot be destroyed
Entirely, as if he had never been created.
The world would have been made to no purpose,
If man should perish when he is dead.
This grand reason is therefore strong proof
That he has a soul which never dies.
The soul was created of such an essence,
That its being will last for ever.
God will therefore not take from him
The power of lasting which He has given to him.
It is indeed true, that all men who live,
Do evil that hurts, and good that benefits:
Hence, reason requires that what is ill
Be punished, and the virtues rewarded.
All will be allotted accordingly.

Raym. v. 2. p. 274.

⁵¹ Anselm says, in his Monologium, 'Some brethren have often studiously prayed me to state some of my meditations on the essence of the Deity, and my other reasonings connected therewith.' In his Prosologion, he remarks, that his former work had occasioned his friends to urge him to another, and in his 'Cur Deus Homo,' he says, 'I have been often anxiously asked by many, both by words and letters, that I should commit to writing the reasons of our faith, which I am accustomed to give to those who inquire. They desire this, not that they may get to faith by reason, but that they may delight themselves by understanding and com-

age this task becomes necessary, because, as every age, attaining new knowledge, places its thoughts in new combinations, so the suggestions of irreligion from time to time appear associated with the most modern philosophy, and must be encountered with fresh reasoning, derived from the same source. It is therefore an important benefit to society whenever an intelligent individual arises, who can combine the great truths of Theism and of Christianity, with the augmented knowledge and larger reasoning with which his contemporaries are familiar. Anselm performed this task in the twelfth century,⁵² as our Paley has done in the eighteenth. The schoolmen revived the discussion; but Thomas Aquinas, and others, like Duns Scotus from the British Islands, applied their Herculean powers to defeat it on this maze ground.

Repressed in metaphysics, it took its stand on the commencing study of natural philosophy. Infidelity is one of the characters of the human mind, which, from the days of Paradise to our own, has never wholly left it; and, till our knowledge is greatly multiplied, will perhaps not be universally extinguished — because it is the champion of matter against mind; of body against spirit; of the senses against the reason; of passion against duty; of self-interest against self-government; of dissatisfaction against content; of the present against the future; of the little that is

CHAP.
III.

ATTACKS
ON PAPAL
CHRISTIANITY.

Prehending the things which they believe, and be ready to give a satisfactory answer to those who require a reason for what they believe.' *Anselmi Opera*, p. 42.

⁵² His *Monologium* begins with arguing, that 'There is a certain best, greatest and Supreme Being.' And he pursues his theme very ably, according to the fashionable style and ideas of that day; but very much in the manner of the Arabian theosophists, whose mode of reasoning was then most esteemed, and industriously imitated.

BOOK
VII.
—
HISTORY
OF RELI-
GION IN
ENGLAND.

known, against all that is unknown; of our limited experience against boundless possibility. The truths of religion are objects of inference, sensibility, faith, and hope—but not of sight and touch. Those individuals who prefer to be sceptical, tend to believe only what they know by sense, and forget that as all the numerous facts of nature that are now known to the enlightened, were once a part of the unknown; and as all our present knowledge is but a small portion of actually existing nature; so nothing can be more inconsistent, even with our past experience, than to withhold from reason its power of just inference; to confine it to the material world or to visible objects, and to believe only as far as the sight has reached. But every age has had this tendency; and wherever it prevails, disbelief of religion, social uneasiness and individual discomfort, will attend it. And yet, in degraded countries, where tyrannous and illiberal superstition reigns, even infidelity becomes an instrument of good. It has often burst those bonds, which the fear of doing wrong made others submit to. It has operated like a pioneer, to clear the way for better regulated reason to follow. And as superstition ever tends to revive, and will always find many worldly interests and passions, as well as much credulous simplicity, to support it, it is not clear that unbelief has yet ceased to be serviceable. Indeed it cannot fail to continue while superstition lasts. In every age, superstition has been the chief parent of infidelity, and is peculiarly prolific of producing it in the more enlightened periods. The awakened mind spurns imposture, and is indignant at trick, tyranny, ignorance and imbecility, in its rulers or teachers. Infidelity and superstition are therefore natural com-

batants ; coeval in birth, always contemporary, and destined to expire together.

We find from Lucas Tudensis,⁵³ that a philosophical book was in circulation in the thirteenth century, intitled, "Perpendiculam Scientiarum," which, from his anxiety expressed about it, had obviously made much impression. He says, that the heretics, who boast of the name of natural philosophers, ascribe to nature the daily course of things ; and that God had conferred on nature the power of making all things ; and that prayers are vain, because nothing can happen but what is determined by nature, therefore nature, not Divine Providence, made them. The object of these doctrines cannot be mistaken ; nor of another, derived from more ancient times, that there was an evil power, who had made all visible things.⁵⁴ He remarks, that the Jews were then encouraged by the princes and judges to express their opposing opinions.⁵⁵

In the curious little book of Alanus, against Heretics and Waldenses,⁵⁶ we find that the new opinions of his day were taking a range so unbounded, that if their circulation had not ceased, religion might have been expunged from the mind of Europe. He says, that formerly, various heresies appeared at different periods, and were successively condemned ; but that in his time the new heretics, as he calls them, were combining and consolidating the old and new errors

CHAP.
III.

ATTACKS
ON PAPAL
CHRISTI-
ANITY.

⁵³ He flourished in 1230.

⁵⁴ Lucas Tud. advers. Alb. l. 3. c. 1 & 2, printed in Mag. Bib. Pat. t. 4. pars 2. pp. 691, 692.

⁵⁵ Luc. Tud. c. 3. p. 693.—He adds, 'And if any one, led by zeal, happens to exasperate one of these Jews, he is punished for it as if he had touched the eye of the judge of the city.' Ib.

⁵⁶ It is a scarce tract. He addresses it to his lord the bishop of Montpellier.

BOOK
VII.HISTORY
OF RELI-
GION IN
ENGLAND.

together, making one vast idol out of many idols; one monster from several. He recapitulates these new opinions, and adds his answers: they embrace all the circuit, and go to the very depths of scepticism.⁵⁷ We have the same fact in the philosophical opinions repeatedly enumerated and condemned, in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, by the university of Paris.⁵⁸ We find a nobleman accused by a Troubadour, of being affected by some of these opinions;⁵⁹ and we know the sentiments expressed by Alphonso, the king of Spain, and by Frederic II. the emperor of Germany, tho this latter chose to be also a persecutor.⁶⁰

These opinions were confounded with those of the Waldenses, who may have maintained some. Indeed,

⁵⁷ As, That there are two authors of nature; That the evil Being is the sovereign of the world, and the creator of our bodies, and of all animal and visible things; That there are no spiritual beings in heaven; That the soul perishes with the body; That there will be no resurrection; That the Jewish law was given by the malignant Being, &c. &c. Alanus adversus Heret. pp. 1-83. Reiner mentions others, who taught, That the world was eternal; That it was not created; That they themselves deny the Trinity, &c.; That there would be no future judgment, &c. 753-755.

⁵⁸ See those condemned in 1227, in Mag. Bib. Pat. vol. 4. p. 917—in 1240 and 1270, p. 926—in 1318, p. 930—in 1340 to 1369, pp. 931-956.

⁵⁹ Hugues St. Cyr, who lived 1220, mentions of him, 'He has neither faith in God, nor in the law; he neither believes in Paradise, nor in another life; he says, that nothing remains of a man after he is dead.' Hist. Troub. vol. 2. p. 182.

⁶⁰ This Emperor's edicts against those he persecuted, are curious for the long catalogues of the names of the prescribed sects, which they enumerate. He calls them in one edict, 'Guzaros, Patarenos, Leonistas, Speronistas, Arnaldistas, Circumcisos;' in another, 'Patarenos, Speronistas, Leonistas, Arianistas, Circumcisos, Passaginos, Joseppinos, Caracenses, Albanenses, Franciscos, Bannaroles, Comistas, Waldenses, Burgaros, Commincellos, Barrinos, et Ortolevos, et cum illis de aqua nigra;' in another he names them, 'Catharus, Patarenos, Pauperes de Lugduno, Passaginos,' &c. Gretzer Prolog. Mag. Bib. t. 4. pars 2. p. 722. By the Burgaros, he meant Bulgaros. Ib. 726. The king of Arragon, Alphonso, in his edict dated 1194, calls them, 'Waldenses sive Insabbatatos; qui alio nomine se vocant Pauperes de Lugduno, et omnes alias hereticos quorum non est numerus.'—Mariana Pref. in Luc. Tud. p. 582.

as Reiner in the thirteenth century reckons seventy sects of heretics,⁶¹ whom he chuses to confound and rank with the Albigenses, and as all the clergy of that day massed them indiscriminately together, it is impossible now to distinguish the different classes. It is sufficient to remark, that from 1200 to 1300, a full century before Wicliffe appeared, men, with new feelings and views of reasoning, either as to the religion in general or to the prevailing hierarchy, were in the most civilized countries of Europe industriously circulating their opinions; sometimes in the church itself; frequently patronized by the great; persecuted wherever the clergy had power; moving from place to place, as danger pressed; and so planting their opinions, from the fury of the hostilities against them, more actively and more extensively. Thus, at the very time that the political mechanism of the papal government was the most complete, the mind of society was almost every where affected by counteracting principles, whose increasing operation could not fail to overthrow it. Religion was in this crisis, as the age of Wicliffe approached.— But before we state the nature and direction of his exertions, it will elucidate the fall of one of the most powerful and sagacious hierarchies that ever swayed mankind, if we review the more worldly incidents, which in our own island contributed to accomplish the wish and crown the efforts of the good and wise, who labored to separate faith from superstition, and piety from imposture.

⁶¹ Reiner contra Wald. p. 747.

C H A P. IV.

*Progress of England to the Reformation of Papal
Christianity, began by WICLIFFE.*BOOK
VII.

OUR Norman princes had never submitted to the temporal sovereignty of the Roman see. The Conqueror had refused to do fealty to the lofty Gregory VII.¹ Both Rufus and his brother Henry had contested with the Pope the question of investitures; and Henry II. in his struggle with Becket,² had evinced the determined system of the English government to reduce the spiritual authorities to a due subordination to the civil powers of the state, instead of allowing them either the superiority or the independence which they projected to establish.

The fierce and sturdy character of Richard I. allowed no increase of an ecclesiastical power, for which he had little reverence. John, after teaching the nation to defy the papacy, unexpectedly threw his kingdom into its hands. But this event, instead of consummating the papal power over England, kindled a sense of national dishonor, which diminished even its former influence. The chain of superstition was, however, not yet broken. The clergy continued it with unanimous co-operation, and it was obvious, that unless the emancipation began with them, neither king nor people could effect it.

The English clergy have always comprized within their body, some of the most conscientious, upright,

¹ Hist. Eng. vol. i. p. 131.² Ib. p. 242.

and intelligent men in the nation. In moral principle and conduct, notwithstanding the imperfections and vices of many, they have never been inferior to those of any other country. They stood by the king in his controversy with Becket; they repeatedly resisted the Pope, when they thought his measures objectionable;³ and they beheld with avowed concern the contests for the papal chair, which so often divided the Christian world. By these disputes, the Popes may be said to have themselves begun the stupendous revolution which destroyed their power; for these perplexing schisms, which no ingenuity could justify, gradually removed that mysterious feeling of veneration by which their assumed infallibility had been popularly supported. By anathematizing each other, and consigning to eternal perdition their respective supporters, they confounded the judgment and excited the criticism of many, who had never before allowed themselves to doubt of that infallibility, which they now saw hurling everlasting condemnation against itself. The wiser part of the clergy became as dissatisfied with these schisms as the deriding laity; and their own reverence for the papal chair insensibly abated. The reports of the immoralities of the pontifical court were not adapted to revive it.⁴ The destruction of the Albigenses, which the holy

CHAP.
IV.

PROGRESS
OF ENG-
LAND TO
THE RE-
FORMA-
TION BY
WICLIFFE.

Effect of
the papal
schisms.

³ See the letters from the 'Clerus Angliæ' to the Pope, published among those of Becket; also those in 1245, in the *Annales Burton. Gale Script.* vol. 1. pp. 297, and 304-310; and see also Matthew Paris.

⁴ See Petrarch's picture of the depravity of the papal court at Avignon. That it continued in the next century at Rome, and had most injurious effects, we have the serious statement of Machiavel:—He says, 'Nor can any thing portend the ruin of our church with more certainty, than that those who are nearest to the church of Rome should have less religion than other people. By the corrupt example of the papal court, Italy has lost all its religion and all its devotion. We Italians have this obligation to the church and its ministers, that by their means we have become heathenish and irreligious.' *Diss. Tit. Liv. l. 1. c. 12.*

BOOK
VII.HISTORY
OF RELI-
GION IN
ENGLAND.

see had itself planned, and by its commissioners executed, excited feelings repugnant to all religious docility. The studies and exercises of the schoolmen had given activity and independence to the studious part of the ecclesiastical body; and before the reign of Henry III. had half passed on, the clerical mind of England visibly shewed that it was not at all disposed to slumber longer in tame servility to its Roman lord. The famous Robert Greathead, bishop of Lincoln, expressed and led the spirit of his age and country on this important subject.⁵

Resistance
of the
clergy to
the Pope.

It was during this reign, that the clergy ventured to resist the heavy contributions⁶ which the Pope

⁵ See his letter to the Pope Innocent, in 1253, in Matt. Paris, p. 870. In this address, with much personal and courtly compliment to the Pope, whom he calls 'The most divine holiness of the Apostolic seat,' he ventures to take a wide distinction between such of the pontifical orders as were consonant with the lessons of Christ, and such as were not. To some of the last he hints the applicability of such epithets as 'odibile, detestabile, and abominabile.' He talks a little about Lucifer and Antichrist, as if he had feelings in his mind which he dared not express; and ends with suggesting, that his opposition to the papal mandates was not 'contradictio sive rebellio,' but a very filial 'honoratio.'—The Pope, on receiving this, was not quite so civil as Greathead wished. He read it with a grim aspect, and exclaimed, 'Who is this mad, deaf, and absurd old man?' He avowed his wish to hurl such confusion upon him, as to make him a fable, an astonishment, and a prodigy to the world. His cardinals wisely recommended milder measures. p. 872. Greathead went fearlessly on to declare the Pope to be both a heretic and antichrist; pp. 874, 875; and after his death was believed to have visited the Pope one night as an apparition, and to have threatened and terrified him by his dreadful invectives when he was meditating to have the bishop's bones dug up and thrown out of the church, p. 883. The diffusion of such an idle tale implies the popularity of Greathead. Wicliffe, in the next century, made great use of bishop Greathead's hostilities against the Pope: In his Postils, he told the people, 'Seith Robert Grosteed that this [Pope's] bulles ben heresies; for thei ben false lores, contrarie to Holy Writ.' MS. Cotton. Lib. Claud. D 8. p. 279. These facts explain the reason why the applications to Rome to make Greathead a saint (Wilk. Conc. vol. 2. p. 287) were but coldly received.

⁶ Thus in 1244, when Innocent IV. sent his letters to extort money (pro pecunia extorquenda) for his war against the emperor, the English clergy answered, That they were not to contribute against the emperor as against a heretic; that as the Roman church had its patrimony, so had they; that tho the Pope was their prince, he was not so in lordship and

CHAP.
IV.PROGRESS
OF ENG-
LAND TO
THE RE-
FORMA-
TION BY
WICLIFFE.

imposed upon them. He persisted in his demands,⁷ and they met them with new statements of their spiritual grievances.⁸ But the Pope hearing their complaints with stern insensibility or with angry censure, they felt it to be their interest to join as far as they dared in the measures of the crown, to emancipate the country from the pontifical prerogatives and exactions, or at least not to oppose. The papal power over England obtained its height in the reign of Henry III. and of course made the evils of its existence then most sensibly and almost generally felt. Besides the direct taxation which he imposed, and, by the threats and practice of excommunication, compelled, he also indirectly obtained other burthensome contributions, and asserted and exercised the right of appointing foreign ecclesiastics, who never visited England, to English benefices. Thus, besides the revenue which he drew from England, for his ancient privileges of the Peter's penny, and other long-

property, but 'cura et solitudine;' that the evangelical text is, 'whomsoever you shall bind on earth,' not, whomsoever you shall plunder; that their revenues were for certain uses, as for their ministry, and for their poor, and could not be taken for other purposes without the authority of the universal church; that their revenues scarcely sufficed for all their own demands; that the king of England and the parliament, were their patrons, who must first be consulted; and that they had already contributed to the holy see, on the faith that there should be no more exactions. Ann. Monast. Burton, pp. 296-298.

⁷ The Pope required, in 1246, the moiety of all their produce, &c. for three years; and also of all livings, &c. Ib. p. 305.

⁸ The English clergy, in their remonstrance, stated their grievances to be, That the Pope, instead of being contented with St. Peter's penny, extorted heavy contributions, and would extort more; that patrons were prevented from presenting fit persons, because the livings were given to Romans, who did not know the English language, and only expected their revenues; that the Pope exacted pensions, &c.; that an Italian incumbent was succeeded by an Italian; that assessments were exacted from them by Rome, without the king's consent; that by the numerous oaths imposed, their ancient customs and liberties were made to vanish; that in the English benefices, given to Italians, neither the right of the diocesan, nor the maintenance of the poor, nor preaching, nor the ornaments nor repairs of the church, were attended to. Ib. p. 309.

BOOK
VIIHISTORY
OF RELI-
GION IN
ENGLAND.Measures
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lessen the
ecclesi-
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power.

accustomed payments ; and besides the new supplies which he compelled by his arbitrary assessments ; he drained the country also of a large portion of its wealth in the produce of the livings which he had conferred upon foreign ecclesiastics, and which were rigorously exacted. The ordinary bullion of the country could not suffice for these compulsory exportations ; and the weight of the grievance was increased by the foreign usurers, who accompanied his legates and bulls, and whose business consisted in supplying the taxed clergy with money to send abroad, in exchange for their moveables and agricultural produce. The exorbitant profits at which these money-brokers transacted their concerns, increased the revolting spirit of all ranks to the papal supremacy.*

The pecuniary claims of the Popes were in direct competition with the necessities of the crown. If Rome were suffered to continue to exact so large a share of ecclesiastical wealth, it was obviously impossible that the clergy could be liberal in their contributions to the state. It became the interest of the crown, for its own sake, to stop these enormous issues to a foreign power. Hence, as soon as the English sceptre was seated in a firm and judicious hand, which occurred under Edward I. it became the settled and persevering object of the executive policy to sever the chain that bound the English clergy to St. Peter's chair. The church of England beheld the first progress of this system with pleasure, because they panted for the independence and increased com-

* The latter part of the History of Matthew Paris is a detailed commentary on the facts alluded to in the text : And see the petitions of the bishops and clergy to the Pope, in 1296, to mitigate his exactions, Wilk. Concl. vol. 2. p. 234. Matt. Paris, in 1256, says expressly, *Tepuit devotio multorum*, to the Pope. p. 926.

forts which it assured them. They could not actively second it, from their dread of the papal excommunication; but it had their secret support and social countenance. They willingly contributed to increase the king's popularity, and assist his measures; they became his ministers, his ambassadors, his agents, and even his soldiers; and thus, unconsciously, the full consequences of their new system assisted to emancipate the English mind from the Ægyptian bondage of the still-beloved superstition.

CHAP.
IV.

PROGRESS
OF ENG-
LAND TO
THE RE-
FORMA-
TION BY
WICLIFFE.

The measures of Edward I. were judicious and decided. He began with protecting the clergy from the burthensome expenses to which some of the barons had subjected them,¹⁰ and permitted bishops to have the punishment of felon clergy, provided that they were made to undergo a proper sentence. Four years afterwards, he put that wise limit on the future increase of their property, which the statute of mortmain imposes. All future donations to them of land, were made void by this law.¹¹ As this left them in the full enjoyment of their existing affluence, it excited small opposition. Shortly afterwards, they were ordered to pay the debts of the intestates, whose goods they administered.¹²

In the thirty-fifth year of his reign, he proceeded to the bold measure, of having it enacted, That no ecclesiastic of any kind should send any rent or taxation, or carry any church goods, *out* of the kingdom; and that no foreigner, who was abbot or prior of any English monastery or place, should impose any payment upon it.¹³ This closed one great drain of wealth from the country.

¹⁰ Stat. Westm. 3 Edw. 1. c. 3.

¹¹ Stat. mortm. 7 Edw. 1. & 13 Edw. 1. c. 32.

¹² Stat. 13 Edw. 1. c. 19.

¹³ Stat. 35 Edw. 1. c. 1.—c. 4.

BOOK
VII.HISTORY
OF RELI-
GION IN
ENGLAND.

The wars of Edward consumed the ordinary supplies of the government. He sought for an additional revenue from the affluence of the church. The barons and the commons willingly seconded demands by which they were benefited. But the clergy, who wished neither king nor pope to interfere with their revenues, resisted the taxation. While they petitioned the Pope to mitigate his exactions, they made use of his pretensions to oppose those of the state. They wrote to the king, that they could not make any pecuniary grant, without leave of the pontiff,¹⁴ who on his part prohibited the king from levying taxes on the church.¹⁵ The clergy, now dreading their domestic more than their foreign sovereign, made an earnest representation to Rome, that Edward was seriously lessening the papal authority in England.¹⁶ Winchelsey, the archbishop of Canterbury, resolutely withstanding the claims of the secular government, the king sternly maintained them; complained to the Pope, that the ambitious prelate was disturbing the kingdom, and procured his suspension from his see.¹⁷

Edward II. restored Winchelsey,¹⁸ but did not abrogate the measures of his father's state policy towards the church. The clergy petitioned parliament to be relieved from the unpalatable statute of mortmain, from lay-taxations, and from other intrusions on their privileges.¹⁹ But their efforts were not successful. Disputes perpetually renewed between the prelates

¹⁴ See their letter to the king, stating, that they could not grant him any money for the renewal of the charters, without leave of the pope, Wilk. Conc. vol. 2. p. 226.

¹⁵ See the Pope's prohibitions, ib. p. 222.

¹⁶ Wilk. Conc. vol. 2. pp. 231-233.

¹⁷ See the king's letter to the Pope, ib. p. 284; and the suspension of the archbishop, p. 286.

¹⁸ 2 Wilk. Conc. 291.

¹⁹ Ib. 315-320, and 325.

CHAP.
IV.PROGRESS
OF ENG-
LAND TO
THE RE-
FORMA-
TION BY
WICLIFFE.

of York and Canterbury, about the honor of having the cross carried before them, as part of their public pomp;²⁰ and excommunications by them of other bishops,²¹ contributed to diminish the moral influence of the ecclesiastical dignities. Dissensions on the election of a new pontiff increased the growing disrespect to the sacred orders; and even Edward the Second's unpopular government had the courage to forbid the archbishop to impose taxations on his clergy; without the royal assent;²² to send his letter to the cardinals, urging them to choose a new Pope; and to summons the clergy,²³ notwithstanding the protestations against his right of convoking and directing them.²⁴

But it was in the reign of Edward III. that the greatest progress was made in reducing the papal power. The king's writ was issued, to inquire what benefices foreigners held in England.²⁵ He issued a strenuous prohibition against appeals to the Roman Court;²⁶ and the house of commons soon took the lead in assailing the papal privileges. In 1343, they represented to the king, that the Pope had granted to two cardinals, benefices in England to the amount of 6000 marcs, and in such a vague and crafty manner, that the levy would be 10,000, if the thing were permitted; that in time the country would be full of aliens, and, from their intrusion, that no son of a great lord or other Englishman would find benefices for their advancement. They complained, that, notwithstanding the regulations made under Edward I. the Pope,

²⁰ 2 Wilk. p. 255.—This was in 1300 and 1306.—The prelate of York forbade all in his diocese to obey Canterbury, p. 285. And see further on their disputes in 1314, pp. 448. 453. 471. and 525.

²¹ 2 Wilk. 407. 413.

²² Ib. 442, 443.

²³ Ib. 420.

²⁴ Ib. 574.

²⁵ Ib. 450.

²⁶ Ib. 584.

BOOK
VII.HISTORY
OF RELI-
GION IN
ENGLAND.

continuing to appropriate to himself the donation of benefices, had given dignities, prebends, and churches, to those who never lived in England; so that in time the patrons would lose their right of presentation, and too much property would be taken out of the kingdom. They declared, that the commons could not and would not endure it;²⁷ and the king, welcoming the acceptable remonstrance, it was ordered, That no one should introduce into England, or deliver in it, any letters, bulls, protests, reservations, instruments or other documents prejudicial to the king and people; and that none should receive such documents, nor accept benefices, nor induct upon them. Penalties were imposed on all the carriers of these papal mandates, and on those who should make appeals, citations, or processes on their account, against the patrons of the benefices.²⁸

Three years afterwards, the house of commons exerted itself to have alien monks expelled from England: and that their abbeys and priories might be seised into the king's hands, in order, from these, to make funds for encouragement and tuition of young scholars. They prayed, that the benefices of other aliens, and of cardinals, might be sequestered; that the money due to the Pope and foreigners might not be taken out of the country; that all alien friars, of every habit, might be made to quit the kingdom; that pensions granted to foreign ecclesiastics, which they specified, might be annulled; and that the clergy should be charged and taxed in all points as the rest of the community. They petitioned also for another important relief: They alleged, that no one was permitted by the ecclesiastical courts to prove a will,

²⁷ Plac. Parl. vol. 2. pp. 143, 144.²⁸ Ib. p. 145.

without giving to the church one-fourth or one-fifth of the property, as a ransom for the rest; and they required the abolition of this abuse.²⁹ In the next year, most of these demands were repeated; ³⁰ and again, with additional requisitions, four years afterwards.³¹

While the king and parliament were thus combining their power to diminish the papal, and with that the ecclesiastical, power and privileges in England, dissensions arose among the clergy themselves, which contributed to unfetter the national mind from that despotism, which they had so cunningly devised and so popularly established. The critical attacks of the reformers, on the wealth, luxury, and opinions of the Catholic church, in the south of France and in Italy, and the success of their itinerant preachers, had occasioned the Pope to accept the aid and to establish the orders of the new mendicant enthusiasts, who, under their leaders, St. Francis and St. Dominic, professed their eager desire to become the spiritual militia of the papal see, against its opponents. The Pope observing the luxurious indolence and secular views of many of the established clergy, which made them every day more absorbed in their own pleasures and ambitions, and less attentive to the progress of his sacerdotal power, and anticipating the ill effects of such worldly conduct on the faith and docility of the European public, willingly accepted the offer of the new enthusiasts to found orders, making poverty one of their characteristics, and missionary activity in the world at large their constant employment. By renouncing property, they met the reformers on one of their most popular principles; by addressing the people every where in the vernacular language, they promised to acquire extensive influence; and by vows

CHAP.
IV.

PROGRESS
OF ENG-
LAND TO
THE RE-
FORMA-
TION BY
WICLIFFE.

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²⁹ Plac. Parl. vol. 2. pp. 162-171.

³⁰ Ib. p. 172.

³¹ Ib. 232.

BOOK
VII.HISTORY
OF RELI-
GION IN
ENGLAND.

of obedience to their chiefs, they would soon be the most manageable servants and the most useful instruments of their papal sovereign. The plan succeeded to the full wishes of its authors. The Dominicans became zealous, popular, and efficacious preachers; the Franciscans pervaded every village; and both orders rapidly attracted the love, and veneration, and obedience of the populace of Europe.

But wealth, luxury, and power, soon became as precious in their estimation, as they were found to be necessary to the habits of the established clergy. It was the interest of the new friars to attack and depreciate the old monks and dignitaries, as it was of these possessors of the envied comforts to repress and exclude the mendicant adventurers. A fierce and implacable warfare soon arose between the new aspirants and the ancient clergy,³² which inevitably made the public judgment the arbitrators of the differences, and as inevitably made that public judgment more enlightened by their mutual detections of each others faults, more sensible of the enormous abuses which were every where increasing, more convinced of the necessity of some general reformation, and gradually more able and more determined to produce it.³³ The rapacity of the new candidates for ecclesiastical power was undisguised;³⁴ and their depreciation of the rest

³² We see the proofs of this warfare in many incidental passages of monkish chronicles. Thus the Chron. Peterb. in 1224, says 'Oh dolor! et plusquam dolor! O pestis truculenta! Fratres minores venerunt in Angliam,' p. 102. The Franciscans and Dominicans were also at variance with each other. Eckleston, who flourished 1340, wrote on the attack on the Franciscans by the Dominicans, in 1269. Tanner, Bib. 249.

³³ Matthew Paris, in 1249, remarks, 'The world now, elated with pride, despised the religion of the cloisters, and struggled to spoil the religious of their property.' p. 768.

³⁴ Of the Predicatores, Matthew Paris says, 'That their ambition disdaining the limits of their poverty, aspired to the highest places; to be venerated and feared by the prelates; to be confessors; to usurp the office of the ordinances, and to get them held in contempt, as insufficient

of the clergy so effectual,³⁵ that by the time that the mendicant orders had succeeded in establishing their popular preponderance, the thinking part of society combined with its government to curtail the privileges, stop the progress, and lessen the wealth and influence of all. This important revolution began with the institution of the friars in the reign of Henry III. and became established in the public mind before the deposition of Richard II. The hostilities of these orders against each other, increased the alienation of society from both.³⁶

In 1256, the people are declared to have laughed at the Dominicans, calling them hypocrites, successors of Anti-Christ, false preachers, flatterers of kings and princes, statesmen not ecclesiastics, despisers and supplanters of the ordained, artfully working into the royal chambers, prevaricating confessions, and contributing to make the immoral more audacious by their absolutions.³⁷ On the Franciscans we have

CHAP.
IV.

PROGRESS
OF ENG-
LAND TO
THE RE-
FORMA-
TION BY
WICLIFFE.

in knowledge and ability to rule the people of God.' 'Hence,' he adds, 'they seemed to many discreet people to disturb enormously the order of the universal church.' Hist. p. 693.—Of the Minors, he says, that they got privately into the territory of some noble monasteries, under pretext of once preaching and immediately departing; built a wooden altar; celebrated clandestine masses; received confessions; and sent persons to Rome, inveighing against the conduct of the monks; obtained thence an order to have a mansion and some benefice for their possessions; and if any one did not satisfy them, placed them among the damned, &c. till they had shared in their treasury. p. 419. These are the statements on the part of the monasteries against their adversaries.

³⁵ Matt. Paris observes, that many, especially noblemen and their wives, despising their own priests and prelates, confessed to the Predicator, whence the dignity and condition of the ordinary clergy, 'non mediocriter viluit.' p. 694.

³⁶ Matt. Paris mentions, that in 1243 a warm controversy began between the two orders. The Predicator declared themselves to be prior, worthier, and more respectable in habit and preaching. The Minors claimed to lead a more strict and humble life.—p. 611.

³⁷ Matt. Paris, 939.

BOOK
VII.HISTORY
OF RELI-
GION IN
ENGLAND.

opinions as unfavorable, among our monkish chroniclers. The Pope fostered them with peculiar care.³⁸ They taunted the ancient clergy on their ignorance,³⁹ they forced themselves into many of the ancient establishments;⁴⁰ and such was the rapidity of their progress, that they who professed the humblest poverty at their origin, walking barefoot, vilely clothed, and girded with ropes, had, in less than four-and-twenty years, obtained edifices as splendid as royal palaces, and revelled in wealth, which they are accused of practising on the fears of their dying penitents, unjustly to augment. One employment was given them, that could not fail to increase the rancor between them and the former ecclesiastical body. As some of the English clergy were known to have died extremely rich, the Pope ordered, that if any ecclesiastic should die intestate, his property should belong to the Roman see; and the Predicatores and Minores were appointed to investigate this subject, and to be diligent in the inquiry.⁴¹

Effect of
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the clergy.

The known luxury and believed immoralities of the wealthy monasteries, made a great impression on the public mind. Even some of the clergy became ashamed of it, and contributed to expose it, both in

³⁸ See his recommendation of the Predicatores, Matt. Paris, 694; and on his favorites, the Franciscans, ib. p. 342.

³⁹ 'They asked devout persons, Are you confessed? Yes.—By whom? By my priest.—Who is that idiot? He never heard lectures on theology; he never labored on the decrees; he never learnt to canvass a single question; they are blind, and leaders of the blind: Come to us.' Matt. Paris, 694.

⁴⁰ Thus in 1258 the Minores forced themselves into Bury monastery, tho the abbot resisted them. Matt. Paris, p. 968.—In 1259, the Predicatores thrust themselves into Dunstaple. Ib. p. 986.—They entered also, without leave, the church of St. Alban. Ib. p. 695.

⁴¹ Matt. Paris, 707.

DURING THE MIDDLE AGES.

England⁴³ and elsewhere.⁴⁴ The pomp, venality, and luxury of the English clergy, at the critical period of the thirteenth and fourteenth century, were not inferior to those of the monasteries, and are strongly implied in the satires of our ancient poets.⁴⁴ The effect of the clerical magnificence and voluptuousness was not only to revolt the moral sense of the nation, but to inflame the envy and excite the resentment of the great. Both the king and the baron felt

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⁴³ It is the subject of a work of Giraldus Cambrensis, that has never been printed, 'Distinctionum libri,' and of which a MS. partly burned, is in the Cotton library, Tiberius, B 13. It is an historical and critical account of the 'incunabula moresque' of some of the monastic establishments, in which he takes some pains to state how the monastic order had been hurt by the 'factis enormibus et inordinatis' of which some were accused. He narrates several revolting stories. We may cite a short one: A discreet knight visited his uncle, an opulent abbot, and having carefully observed the 'modos et mores' of the monks, he took his uncle aside, and advised him to restrain their gluttony and drinking. 'Dear nephew,' exclaimed his uncle, 'do not be anxious about these things. If I were to subtract or diminish any of their enjoyments, I should incur their implacable hatred and hostility, and soon have a deadly cup given to me by my monks, 'letale poculum a monachis meis.'—He describes the disorders of the monks at Canterbury, St. Albans, and others in England, and generally in Wales. MS. Tib. B 13.—Giraldus was answered by Adamus Dorensis, who defended the Cistercian monks. Tanner, Bib. Mon. p. 7.

⁴⁴ St. Bernard's Apology to the abbot of St. Thierry, for having censured the monks, contains a strong picture of the disorders that prevailed among them. See a copious extract in Du Pin's Eccles. Hist. 12th cent. P. 72. Engl. ed.

⁴⁵ See Piers Ploughman's Vision and Crede; Walter Mapes's various poems; and many parts of Gower's Confessio and Vox Clamantis; and also of Chaucer. A few lines of the latter may be quoted from his Plowman's Tale, on their gaudy dress:—

- - - High on horse willeth ride
In glitterande gold of great array.
Ipainted and portred all in pride,
No common knight may go so gay.
Change of clothyng every day,
With golden girles great and small.

He says they are called Christ's ministers—

But Antichrist they serven cleane;
Attired all in tyrannie.
Witnesse of John's prophecie,
That Antichrist is their Admiral.

Chaucer's Plowm. Tale.

BOOK
VII.HISTORY
OF RELI-
GION IN
ENGLAND.

themselves lessened by the pomp, and thwarted by the power, of the prelate and the abbot; and the knights looked with the eye of military rapacity on the rich moveables and fertile possessions of the church, which in every part invited their plunder, and which were unworthily held by those, who they thought ought to have no worldly wealth,⁴⁵ or at least no worldly vice. That many had these feelings, and called for a reform of the church by a diminution of its property and luxury, without being at all changed in faith or opinion, we have an instance in our poet Gower. He declaims against Lollardy;⁴⁶ but he is a warm advocate for ecclesiastical reform, and a severe exposé of ecclesiastical vice.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ Thus the Troubadour, Guillaume de Montagnagout, 'Why do the clergy wish such fine clothes, and to live in opulence? Why will they have such splendid caparisons? Why lay hands on the property of others? when they know, that all which they spend above the most simple living and clothing, is a robbery from the poor.' Palaye's Troubad. vol. 3. p. 100. And see Raimond de Castelnau's satire on the clergy, ib. p. 77. The wealth of some individual clergymen we may infer from the complaint of the precentor of Lincoln church, that he had irrecoverably lost 11,000 marcs of silver. Matt. Paris's Hist. p. 297.

⁴⁶ This newe secte of Lollardie,
And also many an heresie,
Among the clerkes in themselfe.
It were better dike and delve,
And stand upon the right feith,
Then knowe all that the Bible seith.

Gower's Prol. p. 10.

So again—

Beware that thou be not oppressed
With Antichristes Lollardie.

Gower's Conf. l. 5. p. 137.

⁴⁷ See his Prologue, pp. 9-11; and his strong and animated satire on the vices of the clergy, in his *Vox Clamantis*. He begins with the prelates, and goes thro all the other orders of the ecclesiastical body. He is a kind of metrical Seneca. He studies that kind of antithesis in his Latin verse, which Young, at times, so happily pursued in his *Universal Passion*. He is decidedly for the mendicant friars, against the monks and clergy, whom he accuses of selfishness, avarice, sloth, and profligacy. MS. Cott. Lib. Tiber. A 4. On the other hand, the mendicants drew down on themselves all the satire and eloquence of Wicliffe. See also the *Roman de la Rose*, translated, and on this point paraphrased, by Chaucer.

CHAP.
IV.PROGRESS
OF ENG-
LAND TO
THE RE-
FORMA-
TION BY
WICLIFFE.

The immoralities of the Catholic clergy were so little capable of concealment in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, that they compelled the notice of their ecclesiastical chiefs. The cardinal legate of the holy see found it necessary, at a council in 1212, to command the clergy to abstain from improper conversations in their churches; not to have women in their houses; not to preach to get money, nor to exercise the functions of advocates for gain; not to leave the choir during divine service; not to compel the laity to leave them legacies; nor to suffer in their cloisters, assemblies for play or debauchery; nor to entertain women there, nor in the places where wine was sold. Nuns were ordered to lie single. The archbishops and bishops were enjoined not to hear mattins in bed; not to hunt, nor to play at dice or cards, nor to be at the Feasts of Fools; and the monks were forbid to wear white gloves or gaudy shoes.⁴⁸ In England, the moral prohibitions were repeated at various periods. After the example of Bishop Greathead, inquiries were made in 1252, whether the clergy frequented nunneries without reasonable causes, or had female relations with them; or were often at taverns; or were usurers, or traders, or fighters; and whether the rectors and vicars were resident?⁴⁹ In a year or two afterwards, an inquisition was made all over England, whether rectors, vicars, or priests, were 'enormously' illiterate? whether they had wives; whether they carried arms; whether they were drunkards, merchants, usurers, fighters or wrestlers; and whether they had many

⁴⁸ See the Constitutions made at the Council held at Paris in 1212, in Du Pin's Eccl. Hist. 13th cent. pp. 92-94.

⁴⁹ Ann. Burton, ap. Gale's Script. Angl. vol. 1. p. 317.

BOOK
VII.HISTORY
OF RELI-
GION IN
ENGLAND.

cures without dispensations?⁵⁰ In 1279, and at various other periods, we find continual denunciations against their concubines.⁵¹ The conduct of the nuns is frequently alluded to with censure.⁵² Severe penalties were issued in 1279, against those beneficed clergy who carried arms.⁵³ On this point it reads strangely, to find that in 1309, certain ecclesiastics were excommunicated for going about in arms; for joining themselves to thieves, robbers, and other malefactors, and even directing their rapine.⁵⁴ In 1305, and again in 1307, they were ordered not to frequent taverns, public spectacles, or the cells of strumpets; not to visit nuns; nor play at dice or improper games; nor to have concubines, nor to leave their property to *their children*; nor to use green and red silk clothes, or gilt trappings.⁵⁵ The tendency of the rich clergy to superb dresses was so great, that neither the orders of their hierarchy, nor the satires of the poets, could extinguish it.⁵⁶

The vices of the clergy were the natural and unavoidable consequence of the constitutional principles and system of their hierarchy; and will always recur, while that continues, in every country where it dominates and prospers. The release of the clergy from all secular jurisdiction had been found, even in Henry the Second's time, to produce personal depravity. The independence of the monks, of all other supremacy or control but that of a distant sovereign and venal court, ensured their impunity. The abbot was

⁵⁰ Ann. Burton, ap. Gale's Script. Angl. vol. 1. pp. 324-326.

⁵¹ Wilkins' Concil. vol. 2. pp. 36, 142, 169, and 296.

⁵² Du Pin, passim. Wilk. Conc. vol. 2. p. 58, &c.

⁵³ Wilk. Conc. vol. 2. pp. 37-39. ⁵⁴ Ib. vol. 2. p. 415.

⁵⁵ Ib. vol. 2. pp. 281-296. See the remarks on the *sons* of presbyters and rectors succeeding to their fathers in churches, p. 60.

⁵⁶ See this again noticed, Wilkins' Concil. vol. 2. pp. 703-730.

the only chief whom they had to dread; and we have seen that Giraldus intimates, that they knew how to prevent his becoming a moral censor. The great wealth and possessions which the clergy were allowed to receive and encouraged to acquire; and the political power to which the popedom, for its own interests, always urged them to aspire and aided them to obtain; were in them, as in a large part of mankind of every age, incompatible with personal virtue or religious sincerity. The secret poison that was nourished in the heart of every priest, by the power which he claimed, and believed that he possessed, of creating the very Deity whom he worshipped; his privilege of receiving confession, appointing penance, and giving absolution; his assumed command of the pains of purgatory, and of the flames of the infernal world; his excommunications, interdicts, and fiery stake; the subjection and servility of mind, which, from birth to death, it is the constant aim of the papal system, by every possible means, to produce in its adherents—These means of pride and despotism raised the sacerdotal mind to a superior and mysterious sanctity of person as well as in official character, which placed the priest far above his votary, and tempted him to neglect the rules to which he subjected his people. From the ninth century to the fifteenth, we see that human nature was unable to resist all these temptations to corrupt and selfish conduct; and none more unable than the Roman court itself. The evil was so general, that it became at last a necessary doctrine, and was strictly inculcated, that the vices of the priest did not derogate from the efficacy of his sacred character and functions—an opinion that increased the disorders which occasioned

CHAP.
IV.

PROGRESS
OF ENG-
LAND TO
THE RE-
FORMA-
TION BY
WICLIFFE.

BOOK
VII.HISTORY
OF RELI-
GION IN
ENGLAND.

it, but which also accelerated their cure, by rousing the common sense of mankind to dislike the government of teachers, who practised themselves what they declared in others to be deadly sins—unpardonable, till paid for. This last act sealed the fate of the papal hierarchy. The sale of pardons and indulgencies was an absurdity, which even rustic credulity and female docility in time learnt to deride.⁵⁷ The Troubadour poets also lashed the Roman church on this subject, and on its other corruptions.⁵⁸

⁵⁷ Chaucer describes a person, called a Pardoner, as travelling about with his pardons for sale. Our poet thus paints him:—

With him there rode a gentill PARDONNERE—
That streit was comen from the court of Roine;
Ful loude he sang, ‘Come hither, love, to me.’—
His wallet lay beforre him in his lappe,
Bret-ful of pardon come from Rome al hote.

But of his craft; fro Berwike unto Ware
Ne was ther swiche another pardonere.
For in his male he had a pilwebare,
Which, as he saide, was our Ladies veil.
He saide he had a gobbet of the seyl
Thatte Saint Peter had, whan that he went
Upon the see, till Jesus Christ him bent.

He had a crois of laton full of stones;
And in a glas he hadde pigges bones.
But with these relikes, whanne that he fond
A poure persone dwelling upon lond,
Upon a day he gat him more monie,
Than that the parson gat in monethes tweie;
And thus, with fained flattering and japes,
He made the parson, and the peple, his apes.

But trewely to tellen atte last;
He was in chirche a noble ecclesiast.
Wel coude he rede a lesson or a storie;
But, alderbest, he sang an offertorie.
For wel he wiste, whan that song was songe,
He muste preche, and wel afle his tonge
To winne silver, as he right wel coude:
Therefore he sang the merier and loude.

Prol. *Canterb. Tales.*

⁵⁸ Thus Pons de la Garde exclaims:—‘I will speak first of the church. It deceives, in defiance of the most holy laws, and it is wrong in doing so. Yielding to the cupidity which governs it, see how it offers, at a paltry rate, the pardon of every crime. The priests repeat without ceasing, in the pulpit, that we must not desire earthly goods; but they do not

While these political and moral causes were sap-
ping the gorgeous fabric of the Roman church, mental
agencies originating in its own bosom produced new
assailants, that assisted in its overthrow.

It is a curious instance of the inefficacy of selfish,
worldly policy, to make its own contrivances suc-
cessful in perpetuating the servitude of mankind, that
the great revolution of religious doctrines which
ended in the Reformation, sprang up in England
from the new orders of friars, which had been esta-
blished to prevent it. In 1284, the Dominicans, or
preaching friars, were denounced by the archbishop
of Canterbury for propagating dangerous errors at
Oxford.⁵⁰ In the next year, he renews his complaints
against both them and the Minores or Franciscans.

CHAP.
IV.

PROGRESS
OF ENG-
LAND TO
THE RE-
FORMA-
TION BY
WICLIFFE.

act upon their doctrines. They forbid rapine and blasphemy, and they
are themselves guilty of these vices. Unhappily, it is on their example
that the age will form itself.—Rayn. Troub. lxi.

Guillaume Figueras has these effusions:—

‘O, Rome! we know, we cannot doubt it, that with the lure of a false
indulgence, you have delivered up to misfortune the French barons, and
the people of Paris. You have been the cause of the death of the good
King Louis (VIII.) by your exalted preachings, drawing him away into
our climates.’

‘O Rome! such is the greatness of your crime, that you despise God
and the saints. O Rome, deceitful cheat! you govern so unjustly, that
in you, all cunning and all bad faith, are united and concealed.’ Ib. lxiii.

G. de Montagnageut thus expresses himself:—

‘The priests have made themselves the inquisitors of our actions.
I do not blame this; but they judge of them according to their caprice;
and for this I accuse them. Let them destroy error; I desire that; but
let it be done without animosity, and by mild persuasion. Let them bring
back with kindness those who have deviated from the faith.’ Ib. lxiii.

Pierre Cardinal says, angrily, ‘The Jacobins care for nothing but to
dispute which is the best wine; they have established a tribunal to de-
cide upon this. Whoever dares to blame them, is condemned as a
Vaudois. Daring inquisitors! by their order to penetrate our secrets,
they make themselves always formidable.’ Ib. lxiii.

⁵⁰ The main error complained of was, that ‘In man there is only
one form.’ The archbishop adds, ‘It would follow from this, that no body
of a saint exists either totally or partially in all the world, or in any city,
because, without the unity of form, general or special, no body could be,
numeraliter, one.’ This notion had been first started by Thomas Aquinas.
Wilk. Concil. vol. 2. p. 112.

BOOK
VII.HISTORY
OF RELI-
GION IN
ENGLAND.

He arraigns the "captains" of the Dominicans, as—
reviving heresies; censures their falsehood and ma—
lice; and accuses them of calumniating his reputation.
He tells the Franciscans, that they ought to reve-
rence the priests of God; and that they who despise
the episcopal dignity, disturb the peace of the church.
He exclaims against the arrogance of some, who
"more elate than capable, more bold than powerful,
more garrulous than literary, presume to dogmatize
with ignorance, and to delude the seducible young."
He compares them to the locusts in the Revelation.
He dates their novel opinions as but twenty years
old; and complains, that the authority of the holy
fathers was despised and thrown aside.⁶⁰ In the next
year, he enters the field of rebuke and controversy
again: he recapitulates the heresies, which he re-
probates, and which were aimed at Transubstan-
tiation; he excommunicates all who maintain them;
and remarks, with asperity, that they who maintain
them, give no credence to the authority of the Pope,
or of St. Gregory, or St. Austin, or any orthodox
master, but *only* to the authority of the Bible and
necessary reason.⁶¹ Twelve months afterwards, he
requests the bishop of Lincoln to visit Oxford, to in-
quire into certain articles of science, falsely so called,
which were pursued in the studies at Oxford; as if the
first beams of religious improvement began to dawn

⁶⁰ Wilk. Concil. vol. 2. pp. 121, 122.

⁶¹ As, That our Saviour's dead body has no substantial form, nor the same which he had when alive: That in death a new substantial form was introduced, and a new species or nature, tho not joined by a new assumption or union with the word: That into this new form or nature the transubstantiation of the bread was made, &c. &c.: That he who will teach these things does not 'shew faith to the authority of the Pope, or Gregory, or Austin, or such like, or to any master, but *only to the authority of the Bible* and necessary reason.' Wilk. Conc. vol. 2. pp. 123, 124.

from that university.⁶² Soon afterwards, with the inconsistency of a man who, struggling to prop a decaying system, is obliged to use in one part the supports that he rejects in another, he gives the Franciscans, whom he had before denounced, the benefit of his protection. He declaims against "the pestiferous dogmas," that the Minor friars cannot hear confessions, and absolve; and declares, that they may do both, tho without the consent of the parish priests;⁶³ sacrificing thus the ancient clergy of the kingdom to the interests of the new mendicants, whose arrogance and ambition he had endeavored to repress.⁶⁴

CHAP.
IV.

PROGRESS
OF ENG-
LAND TO
THE RE-
FORMA-
TION BY
WICLIFFE.

As Wicliffe's attack on the friars, in his *Trialogus*, gives us the objections which the observing mind raised against them at that time, the following summary of his remarks may not be unacceptable to the inquiring reader:—

WICLIFFE ON THE FRYARS.

They feign mendaciously that they were introduced before our Lord's incarnation.

The Bishop of Lincoln (Greathead) said, of all cloistered persons, especially of the fryar, that he was a dead body come out of a sepulchre, clothed in funeral garments, and living among men,

⁶² Wilk. Conc. vol. 2. p. 128.

⁶³ Ib. p. 168.

⁶⁴ In the reigns of Henry III, Edward I, and Edward II, we find among our records many instances of the government's causing the mendicant friars to be arrested. Thus, 47 Hen. III, *De fratribus Carmelitis vagabundis arrestand.* Calend. Rotul. p. 33.—52 Hen. III, *De fratribus vagabundis capiendis apud Westm.* p. 42.—54 Hen. III, *De fratribus vagabundis arrestand.* p. 43.—So in the next year, p. 44.—In the reign of Edw. I, the same measure occurs, pp. 46 and 49.—So under Edw. II, *De fratribus Minoribus vagabundis arrestand.* p. 77.—*De fratribus Predicatoribus vagabundis arrestand.* p. 78. ib. So p. 79.—In the ninth year of this king's reign, we find a general order to arrest them all over the kingdom: '*De religiosis vagabundis arrestandis per totum regnum.*' p. 81. These arrests, which were afterwards repeated, imply either great misconduct of the friars, or that it was the persevering policy of the government to repress them, as far as it dared exert its power for this purpose.

BOOK
VII.

HISTORY
OF RELI-
GION IN
ENGLAND.

agitated by the devil. It was a corpse, because it was dead in soul, though living in bodily life. The corporeal frame ought to possess a vitality derived from the spiritual soul. The four walls of his monastery shut him up like a tomb. They were hypocrites, using religion to deceive the church.

Their very garments are deluders. Some are russet, to signify, they say, their industry; others white, to mark their mental purity; others black, to express their pretended continual mourning for their sins. By the ugliness of their dress they denoted the vileness of their body, and by their girdle the anxious and continual pain to which they subjected it. The grass that grew within their walls was made the image of their superior virtues, and the trees marked the ladder of the moral excellence by which they ascended to heavenly things. Wicliffe charges them with being the reverse of all their types, and makes their likeness to Satan to consist in their peculiar hypocrisy.—pp. 259–261.

They teach three heresies, to mislead the church :

1. That the consecrated host was an accident without a substance; and yet was not a nothing. In their general council at London, they laid this doctrine down; such an accident they could only form in the host; otherwise they would not say, that it had any quiddity, that is, was any thing. The Dominicans only differed by calling it an aggregation of accidents, without being a nothing.—pp. 261–3.

2. Their mendicity. They lived by begging, and called our Saviour a beggar, and pleaded his example as their precedent and justification, 263–6. Wicliffe maintained that this was unfounded in Scripture, and calls upon us to distinguish between poverty and begging, 267–270.

3. His third charge was on their false letters of fraternity, by which they acquired rents from the poor people, and a confederation with the powerful, by whom they were defended, 261. He calls these a symoniacal heresy. They were finely made, with gilt letters, and adorned with silk threads. They pretended expressly in these letters, that the persons to whom they should grant them would, after death, participate in their merits, 271. Thus they declared themselves to be holy, and gave these letters as affirmations of their sanctity, to be kept for ever in the chests of mankind, p. 272. Many trusted to these, 273.

Hence he charges them with teaching, that a man may dignify himself before God; may give himself a positive worthiness; may thus, as it were, put himself into the place of a God, and thus

CHAP.
IV.PROGRESS
OF ENG-
LAND TO
THE RE-
FORMA-
TION BY
WICLIFFE.

really supersede him, by acquiring merits independent of his final judgment and will. Hence they mendaciously sold their prayers and asserted merits. Thus they asserted the right, not only of having unchangeable merits in themselves, but of transferring the benefit of them to others; and they justified this by the conduct of the pontiffs. "Popes distribute the merits of the saints in heaven; as appears from indulgencies," p. 276. But, adds Wicliffe, the popes at least add the condition, that the persons to whom these are granted shall truly confess and be contrite; but these fryars give their beneficiary letters without even requiring contrition, 277.

He then attacks the indulgencies. They savor of manifest blasphemy. By these the popes pretend not only to save the sinful from going into purgatory, but to command the angels, as soon as the soul leaves the body, to carry it immediately to everlasting rest. The fryars built this doctrine on the omnipotency of Christ. But the pope was his full vicar on earth, and therefore what our Lord could do in heaven, the pope could do on earth. Wicliffe zealously denied all these doctrines, inferences, and practices—pp. 277-280.

He then describes how he considers the four orders of friars, the Dominicans, Franciscans, Augustines and Carmelites, to have begun, 280-1. He then dilates on the twelve abuses which they spread, contrary to the christian law, 284-290, and exposes how they seduce the kingdoms in which they live, and urges with words censurably intemperate, all bishops and seculars to expel them, 290-3. He expatiates on their frauds and malice, 294-7, and again urges their general banishment, 297-301.

At this period, the clergy appear to have possessed above half of the military fees, that is, of the landed property of the kingdom.⁶⁵ But yet amid all the practical errors and superstitions of the Romish hierarchy, superior and purer minds were always arising, to teach a more genuine and spiritual religion than

⁶⁵ It was stated that in England were—46,822 parish churches; 52,285 villæ; 17 bishops; 53,215 feoda militum; of which, the religious had 28,000. Hearne's Avesbury, App.

The half of these military fees would be 26,607; but the clergy had 28,000.

what was daily exhibited to the popular eye, and im-
 pressed on the popular ear; and the wiser and nobler
 part of the church encouraged—at least in England,
 the more intelligent and sincere devotion. We have
 seen this in the circulation of Peter Lombard's work.
 It was shewn in the middle part of the thirteenth cen-
 tury, in the composition of the 'Speculum Ecclesiæ'
 of Edmund, archbishop of Canterbury, who died in
 1247, and whose reputation was displayed and in-
 creased by his subsequent canonization. They were
 not aware that one of the future effects of those purer
 exhibitions of true religion must be to shake all the
 corrupt devices that were connected with it; and as
 this work must have had much effect in producing
 that new religious mind which led to the Reformation,
 we will add an Analysis of it.

ANALYSIS

OF ST. EDMUND'S SPECULUM ECCLESIAE. A.D. 1240.

HE directs himself principally to the religious, and begins with
 the apostolic precept, 'Look to your vocation,' observe to what
 you are called. Follow the path to perfection.

'To live perfectly, is to live friendly, humbly, honorably, with
 humility as to yourself, with friendship as to your neighbor, with
 honoring veneration as to God. Then you will place your whole
 intention in performing the divine will. Therefore in all that you
 think and speak, ask yourself first if it be consistent with that. If
 it be, do it to the utmost of your power; if not, avoid it as you
 would the death that will follow. If I am asked, what is His will,
 I answer, your sanctification. It is His supreme will that you
 should be holy.

'Two things effect this; knowlege and love; but you cannot come
 to the knowlege of Him who is truth itself, but by duly knowing
 yourself; nor to the love of Him who is goodness itself, but by
 loving your neighbor.

You will attain the knowlege of yourself by frequent medita-
 tion, and to the knowlege of Him by pure contemplation. As to
 yourself, think diligently what you are, what you have been, and
 what you will be; first, as to your body, and then as to your soul.

As to your body, you are as mean as the dust you tread on ; born in sin, you have led your life in much sorrow ; and after your death, will be the food of insects and reptiles. As to your soul, you must principally inquire what you have been and are, for you cannot well know what you will be. Think of the evil you have done, and of the good you have neglected to do. Think how long you have lived, and how much time you have lost, and how little of it you have improved ; and remember the minute account that must be given of all its application.

CHA
IV.

PROGRE
OF ENG-
LAND TO
THE RE-
FORMA-
TION BY
WICLIFF

How small is the portion of good which you possess ; how often, both by day and night, you desire the things that will not benefit you ! How often have you not been cheated here by vain glory, by indiscretion, and by intemperance, as well as by pain and improper affections ! How elevated by false hope ; how mutable ; how frail ; how yielding ! Yet your Creator formed your limbs and senses noble and beauteous. None could have arranged them better ; none have provided more kindly for you ; yet how little have you loved Him ! Your earthly parents, dust and worms and sin like yourself, obtain your affections ; and yet from Him you turn away. O love Him, from whom all beauty comes ; and love all men spiritually, for His sake.

If you would but consider His goodness to you ; what He is always exhibiting to you, and always adding, you could not but be attached to Him. When you were not existing, He made you ; when you were perishing, He sought you ; when you were under the malediction of sin, He redeemed you ; when you were condemned, He saved you. He has baptized you for Himself ; and now, tho you have since frequently sinned, He liberally and wisely sustains you, invites you, and expects you. Most kindly He would receive you, and place you in most sweet communion with Him. He corrects, He teaches, He cherishes you : when you sleep, He preserves you ; when you awake, He upholds you.

Think, then, of Him, talk of Him, and praise Him every day. In the morning, remember how many have perished while you were sleeping, and by all sorts of destruction. How many have been pursuing what was vicious, and injuring themselves by folly and evil. From all these mischiefs your gracious God has protected you ; and without any services or deserts on your part. Raise then your hands, and a heart of thankfulness to Him, and bless Him for all His bounties.—He here inserts two prayers which any Protestant might use, excepting one line, ‘ by the in-

BOOK
VII.HISTORY
OF RELI-
GION IN
ENGLAND.

tercession of the Virgin Mary and all the saints,' an expression which never occurs again in the treatise.

In the sixth chapter, he tells us that there are three subjects of contemplation;—the Creation, the Scriptures, the divine nature of God. In all His creatures He is visible; you may trace Him every where by His power, His wisdom, and His goodness. By His power, all things were created; by His wisdom, they are wonderfully guided and governed; by His goodness, they are daily multiplied. His power you see in their formation and magnitude; His wisdom, in their beauty and arrangement; His goodness, in their virtues and multiplication.

To some He gives being only, as to stones; to some to live as well as to be, as trees and plants; to others to feel as well as live, as beasts; and to others to understand, as well as to feel and live. This is the prerogative of angels and men. Men only exist with stones, live with trees, feel with beasts, and understand like angels. Human nature therefore excels all the rest of creation; and hence St. Augustin said, 'I would not change states with the angels, if I can attain the place which is allotted to man.' Of what confusion, then, is not that man worthy, who will not live according to his moral rank and condition. All things in this world are created to help us, to clothe us, or to sustain us; even what is evil is intended to chastise, to amend, and to instruct us. We are benefited when we think that these occur to us on account of our sins; we then become sensible of our frailty, and are humbled, as we ought to be. Thus you may discern the hand of God in all His creations; and seeing Him, exalt your heart to Him. Reflect how vast must His power be, who has made the Universe from nothing, and gifted it with being; what wisdom was requisite so to beautify and order it, and what goodness to make all things useful to us. O how great is His mercy, tho we are so perverse! We abuse His kindnesses, and yet He produces them; He creates them for us. Say then to Him, they are, because Thou art; because Thou art beautiful, they are fair; they are good, because Thou art good. Most rightfully, then, all Thy creatures praise Thee, adore Thee, and glorify Thee. O blessed Trinity: O Thou one sole Godhead! from whom all things exist, and by whose intelligence all are governed; glory and honor be to Thee for ever and ever.

He then teaches us to contemplate Him in His sacred scriptures, where we may learn to improve our souls, to hate sin, to love virtue, to fear punishment, to desire glory, to look down

upon this erring world, to hasten forwards towards another, to do what will most fit us for that newer state, and to leave undone what will prevent us from attaining it.

The seven mortal sins; the seven evangelical virtues; the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit; the ten commandments; the virtues of faith, hope and charity, or divine love, and their sufficiency; the twelve articles of faith; the seven sacraments; the four cardinal virtues; the seven works of mercy; the petitions of the Lord's prayer; are then separately discussed, with much moral wisdom, and in an unaffected style.

His other chapters are on the qualities of the soul and body; the pains of hell; the contemplation of God in his humility; our Saviour's nativity and resurrection; the advent of the Holy Spirit; the incarnation, crucifixion, and ascension; on the contemplation of God as to His divinity; that He is one in essence in three personalities; and on the three degrees of the contemplation of the soul. It concludes with the chapter, How to live honorably, friendlily, and humbly. 16 Mag. Bib. Pat. pp. 767-788.

It was impossible for any mind of good sense to read a treatise like this, and then to look at the practised superstitions of the day, without feeling an aversion to them, a desire for their reformation, and a taste for a purer system of religious conduct and belief.

CHA
IV.

PROGRES
OF ENG-
LAND TO
THE RE-
FORMA-
TION BY
WICLIFF

C H A P. V.

*History of the Writings and Opinions of JOHN WICLIFFE.*BOOK
VII.

THE preceding sketches of the tenets, system, and manners of the English clergy, lead us to infer, that if they had continued unchanged, society would have declined into increasing deterioration. Fantastic systems of right and wrong being taught by the clergy, instead of the inflexible morality of their superseded Scriptures; and the active world, who despised the papal standard of merit, inventing others more consonant with their own habits, but as little connected with personal virtue as the superstitions of the political churchman; what useful result could occur? While the monk and the knight alike hated and reviled each other, the bulk of mankind were becoming indifferent to both; and began to lose all sense of moral obligation in that indulgence of their individual gratifications and humors, which both their temporal and spiritual chiefs were publicly practising.

As the papal system stood, no progress was attainable but in direct opposition to its most dreaded injunctions; and yet to overthrow it, before a more useful substitute was provided, would be only changing the shape of an evil, without any diminution of its mischief. It is true, that any religious system, however wild or perverted, will suffice to make an oath binding on the conscience of its votary; which is all that some philosophers require: and the adoration of a crocodile will answer this purpose, while the animal

keeps in fashion. But the obligation of an oath is only one of the operations of a religion on mankind, and it is not its most important agency; for if its other consequences be such as to generate a neglect or depreciation of the moral virtues, or to curtail individual improvement, or to multiply civil wrongs and private crimes, the legislator, in patronizing such a religious system, will be raising a harvest of mischief on the one hand, to be ineffectually counteracted by the diminishing efficacy of his oath on the other. We have the experience of Juvenal,¹ and of the history of his contemporaries, for our instruction—that if the established religion be such as to excite the contempt of the enlightened world, it does not even hinder perjury, but rather emboldens it. The deposing witness, emancipated in his own secret mind from all belief of the worship which he publicly maintains, or, as Mr. Gibbon expresses it, ‘concealing the sentiments of an atheist in the sacerdotal,’ we may add the magisterial or civic ‘robes,’ fearlessly lays his hand on the altar of Jupiter, or the once dreaded relic, and utters his falsehoods without dread, and, from his unawed selfishness, without shame. Nor is this the whole result: far greater evils follow, which disprove the theory, that all religious systems will be found equally efficacious for the peace and welfare of mankind.

The mind and conduct of the believer become always strongly assimilated to the mode and object of his worship. The adoration of a crocodile or a Moloch, vitiates the human character and actions with corresponding degradation. Moral virtues cannot co-exist with Hinduism, but so far as the inculcated creed

CHAP.
V.

WRITINGS
AND OPI-
NIONS OF
WICLIFFE.

¹ His 13th Satire is a masterpiece of reason and poetry, on this subject.

BOOK
VII.HISTORY
OF RELI-
GION IN
ENGLAND.

and rites of its Bramins are disbelieved or disregarded. In every part of the world, the votary will always reason like the young profligate in Terence,² tho he may not so openly express his feelings; and, therefore, it is of the greatest importance to the intellect and integrity of the world, that its religion, as well in the adored objects as in its rites and system, should have nothing irrational, false, immoral, or injurious. But all these epithets had, in the fourteenth century, become applicable to papal Christianity. The interests of society therefore imperiously demanded, at that time, that the corruptions should be removed, and that the faith and worship of Christianity should be restored to its native truth and beauty, and thereby become more compatible with the knowlege and improving reason of the day. But how difficult was it for an individual to arise, competent to perform the Herculean task. The religious feelings which he would need, would be unfavorable to his mental emancipation; and the mental emancipation would tend to destroy his religious impressions. To combine the due mixture of each, so as to be able to see and separate the gold from the dross; and to fix the boundary-line between the absurdities proper to discard, and the essential truths that were to be retained; required an union of acuteness, knowlege, piety, judgment, firmness and intrepidity, which occurred at that time only in John Wicliffe, a teacher at Oxford, and rector of Lutterworth in Leicestershire. His exertions were of a value that has been always highly rated, but which the late events of European history considerably enhance, by shewing how much the chances

² In the well-known passage, Shall Jupiter do this, and 'ego homuncio' not?

are against such a character arising. Many can demolish the superstition—but where is the skill and the desire to rebuild a nobler fabric? When such men as Wicliffe, Huss, or Luther appear, they preserve society from darkness and depravity; and happy would it be for the peace of European society, if either France, Spain, or Italy, could produce them now.

CHAP.
V.

WRITINGS
AND OPI-
NIONS OF
WICLIFFE.

It is clear, from the facts in the preceding chapters, that Wicliffe did not originate the attacks on the papal hierarchy. These had begun long before he existed; and it is clear, from such books as the *Speculum Ecclesiæ*, that a religious mind, superior to the superstitions of the day, was already cultivated and cherished by many of the clergy.

These feelings, these books, and the incidents that have been detailed, all concurred, with the enlarging fields of knowledge that began to be explored, to put the public mind into a new state of feeling and thinking on religion, and to prepare and dispose it for great revolutions. The reflective and conscientious having become dissatisfied with the existing state of things, altho authority might curb the general communication of their sentiments, the exertion of its opposing power would only make the necessity of reformation more strongly felt; and convert a reasoning speculation into an active passion. It remained for the ruling powers of society, either to discern the improving spirit of the age, and gradually to conform the prevailing institutions to its progress; or, by maintaining the existing system with all its visible abuses and imperfections, to force the spirit of reformation into a perilous hostility. The ecclesiastical hierarchy resolved to permit no change, and

BOOK
VII.HISTORY
OF RELI-
GION IN
ENGLAND.

even stoutly resisted the attempts for its moral reformation. It determined to preserve its whole system, and all its dependencies, and all its wealth, untouched, by the most vigorous exertions of its power, and of its secular allies. It denounced all opposing criticism as error and heresy; and prepared the excommunication, the dungeon, and the stake, as the reward of enmity, dissent, and innovation. The consequences were, the deposition of two sovereigns; civil wars for nearly a century; and, at last, the entire subversion of that very system which its advocates, from such miscalculating selfishness, had so blindly and so obstinately resolved to keep unmodified and unshaken. Such will ever be the result of power warring against reason, and sternly maintaining abuses, instead of being vigilant to perceive, and of assisting gradually to meliorate and remove them.

In justice to the Papacy it must be stated, that it was not at first blind to the approaching evil, and that it attempted the appropriate remedy. So early as 1215, Innocent III. exhorted the council which then met, to correct the ecclesiastical manners, because the disorders flowed principally from the clergy: from their conduct he declared the evils to proceed, which were infesting the church.³ But how reform a body of men, who were enjoying half the property of Europe, and whose irregularities were practised by their very leaders, who called out for their amendment! Cardinals came over to England, and made strong laws against ecclesiastical depravity. How were these censors met? Some of the censured detected one of the cardinal legates in the commission of

³ Du Pin's Eccl. Hist. 13th cent. p. 95.

vice himself, and exposed and derided the corrupted teacher.⁴ The bishop, the abbot, the monk, the friar, the cardinal, and the pope, were too much alike in their propensities and manners, to be entitled to reproach, or qualified to amend each other. Councils, therefore, made constitutions—popes exhorted—and reformers sneered. But those who had the means of luxury, would not renounce it; and it became obvious, that nothing less than a total change of the system, or a subtraction of the property of the hierarchy, would be effective to amend it. Even Innocent III. who saw the evil produced by the moral disorders, was yet unable or unwilling to perceive that his mental system was falling below the intellect of the age, and must be improved or abolished. He thought, like many vulgar statesmen, that the sword could uphold it; and he used that sword with all the cruelty of a Nero, multiplying by it every danger he most dreaded, and ensuring to his own authority, thus abused, the hatred of the feeling heart and reasoning mind.⁵

It was the distinction taken between the faith and manners, the doctrines and the property, of the clergy, that mainly subverted their power; because on that point they were most assailable. They had made themselves the sole judges of their faith and doctrines. On this ground they were long impregnable, because their property, like a mighty bulwark, baffled all assault. But when the spirit arose, in those whose faith was unimpeachable, of rebuking their vices and diminishing their wealth, the day of the dissolution of their power began to dawn. Thousands favored this innovation, who were as indignant

⁴ Matt. Paris.⁵ Mosheim.

BOOK
VII.HISTORY
OF RELI-
GION IN
ENGLAND.

against heresy as the Pontiff himself. Thus two descriptions of reformers appeared: those, who believed whatever the church wished them to believe, but who demanded its moral reformation: and those, who accused both the faith and system of the clergy of gross errors and mischiefs. These two classes of reformers were at first antagonists of each other: but as the hierarchy equally dreaded both, and disliked those most who attacked its property, it chose to confound and reprobate them together; and by this conduct compelled them at last to intermingle and unite.

The competition for the Papacy in 1378, which occasioned double Popes to be chosen, residing the one at Avignon and the other at Rome, and execrating and fighting each other with their paper manifestoes, and with the swords of their allies, for forty years, excited the surprised and sneering world to reflections, which encouraged the circulation of all the opinions that had been uttered by the persecuted and dispersed reformers, from the Alps and Pyrenees, and which now began to be diffused by their successors. One of the first who was distinguished by his activity in England, was a priest named John Ball. From the year 1366 to 1382,⁶ he is noticed to have been indefatigable in promulgating his new opinions, sometimes in churches and church-yards, and sometimes in market-places:⁷ his talents, perseverance, and success, at last occasioned his imprisonment. But other spirits were also at work; for, in 1368, the archbishop of Canterbury pointed out thirty errors which were in circulation, and magisterially condemned them.⁸

John Ball.

⁶ The archbishop's letter against him is dated 1366. Wilk. Conc. vol. 3. p. 64.

⁷ Ib. p. 152.

⁸ Ib. p. 75.

The intellect which was to reduce to practice what others were conceiving and desiring, and thereby to change the state of the ecclesiastical world, began now to emerge to notice, persecution, and popularity. Born at Richmond in Yorkshire, in 1324, John Wicliffe became a commoner of Queen's College, probationer of Merton, master of Baliol, and afterwards the head of Canterbury College, at Oxford. In 1361, he was presented by Baliol College with the living of Fillingham;⁹ and he became afterwards the rector of Lutterworth. It was after the year 1372,¹⁰ and before 1377, that he made his great attack on the papal system, in his *Dialogus*. This work is a Latin dialogue, between three persons, on the Deity, the spiritual world, the virtues, and the ecclesiastical doctrines and institutions. Its attractive merit was, that it combined the new opinions with the scholastic style of thinking and deductions. It was not the mere illiterate reformer, teaching novelties, whom the man of education disdained and derided; it was the respected academician reasoning with the ideas of the reformer. In this work he declares the Roman Pontiff to be the Anti-Christ;¹¹ he ridicules the adoration of the saints,¹² and asserts the mediatorial office of our

CHAP.
V.
WRITINGS
AND OPI-
NIONS OF
WICLIFFE.
Birth of
Wicliffe.

His Tri-
logus.

⁹ See Tanner's *Bib. Monast. voc. Wiclevus*.

¹⁰ Wicliffe mentions this year in his *Dialogus*, but as 'recenter,' p. 292; so that we may infer the book to have been written soon afterwards.

¹¹ 'The Roman pontiff is the chief Anti-Christ, for he falsely pretends that he is the most immediate and resembling vicar of Christ in this world. He claims, from the imperial endowment, to have the chief domination, and to be the richest man in the world. But Christ had not where to lay his head. How then can such an Anti-Christ say that he is the vicar of our Lord, or like him? It is obvious, that he is not, as he calls himself, the most humble man, but the elated vicar of the king of pride.' *Wic. Trial.* p. 130.

¹² 'Let the faithful consider why particular churches, so laboriously and so expensively ask the Roman court to canonize their brethren, and he will see, that inordinate cupidity and defect of faith occasion it. Who,

BOOK
VII.HISTORY
OF RELI-
GION IN
ENGLAND.

Saviour;¹³ he condemns the superseding of the Gospel by pretended tradition,¹⁴ and the granting of indulgencies.¹⁵ On the eucharist, he opposed the established creed of transubstantiation, and asserted, that tho a sacramental effect took place on the consecration, yet that the bread and wine remained bread and wine, as our senses perceived them; they were only sacramentally, that is, mentally and spiritually otherwise.¹⁶ By this distinction, he removed from the most venerated part of religious worship the great provocative to infidelity; and preserved the English mind from that absolute rejection of Christianity, which the Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation has, since the

I ask, would make a buffoon his mediator, when he might have the aid of a most clement and ready king? The saints are not indeed buffoons; but they are less, in comparison with Christ, than a buffoon is to an earthly sovereign.' Wic. Trial. pp. 173, 174.

¹³ 'Christ is himself the mediator, the intercessor; the best, the most ready, and the most benign. He would therefore be a fool who should seek for another; because, if when two eligible things were proposed, we were, without a necessity, to prefer the least eligible, it would be acting absurdly. Christ is always dwelling with the Father, and ever ready to intercede for us. We ought not, then, to seek for the mediation of saints, because he is kinder and more disposed to help us than any of them.' Wic. Trial. p. 173.

¹⁴ 'Want of faith in Scripture, is the cause of pride; and this pride chiefly consists in hypocrisy, the worst kind of pride, and often pursues our religious. They would not presume to superadd traditions upon the Gospel, which are usually contrary to reason, unless they were laboring hypocritically. Therefore the Brothers utter an invented untruth, when they say, that they have a private rule which exceeds in goodness the rules of Jesus Christ.' Wic. Trial. p. 110.

¹⁵ After rebuking them for awarding the punishment of the next world, he adds, 'It appears that the prelates, granting indulgencies, commonly blaspheme the wisdom of God; for they foolishly and covetously pretend that they know matters of which they are ignorant.' p. 100.

¹⁶ 'Capere debemus a communi experientia sensus nostri, quod sacerdos ad altare accedens, ex pane et vino conficit vel consecrat unum sensibile remanens quod *vulgus* intelligit corpus et sanguinem Jesu Christi.' Trial. p. 183. 'Iste panis est corpus Christi, ergo iste panis est; et per consequens, *manet* panis; et sic simul est panis et corpus Christi.' p. 190. He adds this conclusion: 'Et patet fidelitas conclusiones predictæ, quod hoc sacramentum venerabile est *in natura sua verus panis* et sacramentaliter, corpus Christi.' p. 192. He discusses this subject thro several chapters.

thirteenth century, been so fatally producing in every country where it predominates, even among many of its teachers.

Against the mendicant friars, whom the Papacy was using as its new spiritual militia, as in the next century it adopted the Jesuits, and has now revived them to be its active and diffused partisans, the reasoning and declamations of Wicliffe were incessant. He takes every occasion to allude to them, and never without satire and reproach.¹⁷ He repels the pernicious opinion, that tho a prelate should be luxurious, an homicide, simoniacal, or otherwise vicious, yet that he must not be believed to be so by the subjected people.¹⁸ When it is objected to him, that it would follow from his observations, that the Pope and his cardinals frequently are defective in their faith, and deceive both themselves and their churches, he boldly adds, "It would be a lamentable conclusion, but it would be a true one."¹⁹ On the priesthood, he ventures to hint, that tho it becomes priests of pious lives to be the consecrators of the sacrament, yet, recollecting their frequent unworthiness, he adds, that the laity may also do it; and he quotes St. Cecilia as an instance.²⁰ On baptism, he suggests, that it is immaterial whether there be one immersion or three, or the water be poured on the head; the custom of the place where the party lives, should be the rule on this subject:²¹ but that as to the removal of sin, there can be no satisfaction but the death of Christ. He attacks fearlessly the avarice of the clergy, and contends earnestly for their moral fitness. He adds this simile—"When the king sends an army

CHAP.
V.

WRITINGS
AND OPI-
NIONS OF
WICLIFFE.

¹⁷ Wicl. Trial. passim, and especially pp. 261-297.

¹⁹ Ib. p. 198.

²⁰ Ib. p. 212.

¹⁸ Ib. p. 201.

²¹ Ib. p. 213.

BOOK
VII.HISTORY
OF RELI-
GION IN
ENGLAND.

to combat in France, he chuses the ablest and the most skilful warriors; ought there to be less circumspection and solicitude about the qualities of those who have to fight against the devil, and to obtain for themselves and their people the kingdom of God?"²²

The practice of private auricular confession to a priest, he ascribes to Innocent III. and disapproves. He says truly, that the real efficacy of penitence consists in the altered disposition of the mind, and not in the technical confession, absolution, or penances enjoined.²³ He denies the Pope's power of binding or loosing, and his right to be deemed the vicar either of Christ or St. Peter.²⁴ He rebukes the presumptuous doctrine, that without extreme unction no man can be saved.²⁵ He enlarges on bishop Greathead's satirical definition of a monk, which has been already quoted in a preceding page, and applies it to friars.²⁶ He attacks the strange doctrine of supererogation, or that friars and saints may have merits more than enough for their own salvation, and which they may therefore sell to others; and that these merits composed a kind of accumulating bank or fund of merits, which the Pope might distribute and barter to others—an extravagant invention of the human fancy, on which the system of indulgencies sold and purchased, rested.²⁷ He maintains the important truth, that no man ought to do evil for the sake of any finite or infinite good.²⁸ He calls upon the great men of the country to defend the people against the frauds, exactions, and luxury of the friars, whose number he computes at 4000, and their

²² Wicl. Trial. p. 238.²³ Ib. p. 258.²⁴ Ib. p. 94.²⁵ Ib. pp. 250-253.²⁶ Ib. p. 260.²⁷ Ib. p. 253.²⁸ Ib. pp. 274-280.

useless expenditure, supported by begging, at 60,000 marcs every year.³⁰ He terminates his important treatise by considering the future condition of man; the last judgment; the nature of the soul, and its final destinies.

CHAP.
V.

WRITINGS
AND OPI-
NIONS OF
WICLIFFE.

Wicliffe wrote this work with a strong impression of his personal danger. He states, that those whom he opposed were machinating his death,³⁰ and he strenuously enforces the duty of suffering martyrdom for the sake of truth; and earnestly contends, that it was as necessary in his time as in ancient days.³¹ He adds emphatically, "Instead of visiting Pagans, to convert them by martyrdom, let us preach constantly the law of Christ, even to the princely prelates—martyrdom will then occur to us rapidly enough, if we persevere in faith and patience."³²

As this is now a rare Work, and little known, we will add a further account of it.

ANALYSIS OF WICLIFFE'S TRIALOGUS.

The TRIALOGUS of Wicliffe contains a discussion of many philosophical, scholastic, and religious truths, between three speakers, Alithia, Pseudis and Phronesis. Alithia usually proposes the topic, Pseudis makes the objection, and Phronesis gives the deciding judgment. The Latin style of the work is not equal

³⁰ Wicl. Trial, pp. 287-299.

³⁰ Ib. p. 189.

³¹ 'As all ought to be the soldiers of Christ, it is evident how many are condemned by their sloth, who let the fear of the loss of temporal benefits, or of worldly friendship, or of the welfare of the body, make them unfaithful in the cause of God, or averse to stand manfully by it, even to death, if necessary. It is a satanical excuse which modern hypocrites make, that it is not necessary now to suffer martyrdom as it was in the primitive church, because now all, or the greatest part of living persons, are believers, and there are no tyrants who put Christians to death. This excuse is suggested by the devil; for if the faithful now would stand firm for the law of Christ, and, as his soldiers, endure bravely any sufferings, they might tell the pope, the cardinals, the bishops and other prelates, how, departing from the faith of the Gospel, they minister improperly to God, and what perilous injury they commit against his people.' Wicl. Trial. pp. 125, 126.

³² Ib. p. 126.

BOOK
VII.HISTORY
OF RELI-
GION IN
ENGLAND.

to its good intentions; for it is very plain and crabbed, often obscure, and at times rather barbarous than classical.

In the first conversation, Phronesis proves, that there is a God; and that He is the first cause of all things; the first infinite truth; the divine nature, from which every other truth is inferible, p. 1-3.

In the second, Alithia notices the opinion of Plato, that the Deity is superior to all description, altho language would not so much fail in speaking of him, if his excellencies were not most transcendent. She infers, that He cannot be matter or form, but must have been eternally and every where the immeasurable, because his mode of existence is to govern and to cause. As He every where rules and causes, He must necessarily be every where, He must be immense, because having produced an infinite universe, He must be infinitely local. No mensuration can measure him. He is also infinite, because he has no end, and is bounded by no other power. Phronesis approves of this. Pseudis asks, Whether a man may not conceive something greater than the Deity, tho nothing really is so? But Alithia denies, that man's intellectual power can exceed the divine intellectual power; and therefore affirms, that man cannot understand what the Deity cannot. Phronesis admits, that man may fancy a number of absurdities; as that there are animals half a stag and half a goat; that a man is a mere shadow or a donkey, or that he could destroy his Maker, which could not enter the divine mind; because that is always good and wise, and true. Man therefore may be what the Deity cannot be, that is, foolish and vicious, 3-10.

The next discourse is, whether the Deity is all that it is better to be than not to be. Phronesis declares, that He is the best of all things that can be, p. 11, 12; and then infers, that He is just, that He is intelligent. That He is all things, and knows all things; that He is all that has been, and will be; omnipotent, indivisible, and existing in three co-eternal, co-equal, and co-ordinate personalities, 13-18.

He remarks, that Plato had an idea of the divine tri-unity. He discusses the natural demonstration of this truth, 19-21; and then proceeds to state, what it is that constitutes personality in the divine essence, 21-24.

A conversation then ensues, on what ideas are; and on the opinions of Plato and Aristotle concerning them, 24-27; on the intelligence and power of God, 27-30; and on the limit of ideas. He concludes this chapter and his first book, by remarking on

the error of the papal church, in saying, that the sacramental host is an accident without a subject; a thing which no one can understand, and no one conceive, 30-33.

His second book opens with a discourse on the created universe. Alithia affirms creation to be the exterior action of the Deity. She distinguishes between a thing always being and being eternal. The world is always existing, but has not been eternally so, because it was created. Looking on it, then, as an aggregate of an university of creatures, both substantial and accidental, it will be seen to consist in a certain succession, and is composed 'ex non quantis.' But as its material essence, which some call its first matter, is perpetual, however divided; so the other substances abstractly, which we call angels, human souls and universals, are also perpetual, and will necessarily always be. Pseudis calls her words insipid, and destructive of philosophy, because the world is always becoming new, and always ceasing to be. All sublunary substances are continually generating. Phronesis decides, that the whole corporeal world is one substance, and sufficiently continues to be naturally one unceasing body, and does not, in its changes, either begin or cease to be, 34-36.

The triple measure of eternity is then considered. All spirits are deemed to constitute one spirit, and one duration is common to all. Eternity is defined to be the duration of the Deity, and time the duration of the world. The nature of which, or quandality, is then examined; the distinction is made between being in an instant of time, and for an instant; and of the Deity, the proper language is stated to be, that He is, not that He has been, 36-40.

The three following chapters treat of the composition and creation of things, of the quiddity and the plurality of the first matter, and of the intellectual soul and its powers. The spirit is, against Averroes, declared to be incorruptible and perpetual, but, as an accident, inhabits a corruptible body. The soul is the basis of man; all his personality resides in his spirit, 40-47.

The anatomy of the brain and the senses are then examined, and their sensations are discussed, 49-54. Alithia inquires, if the immortality of the soul can be deduced by reason; and Phronesis gives her many philosophical reasons to prove it, 55-59: and afterwards, in answer to Pseudis, discusses the powers of the human intellect, 59-62.

The next chapters are conversations on the angels; on their various offices; and the fallen angels and their punishments, and

CHAP.
V.

—
WRITINGS
AND OPI-
NIONS OF
WICLIFFE;
—

BOOK
VII.

HISTORY
OF RELI-
GION IN
ENGLAND.

on their warfare, 62-70. This book proceeds to a discussion of the divine predestination and prescience, in which Phronesis declares, that it seems probable to him, that the Deity necessitates all his active creatures to every action, and that some are predestinated; that is, after labor, ordained to glory; and others, after a bad life, consigned to punishment. If it be inquired, what completely causes the eternal ordination of God before it be effected, the answer is, His volition. Every elect was predestinated before the constitution of the world, and yet no man existed before it, otherwise he would be eternal. Therefore, tho he existed in inconceivable being before the world was framed, and so was conceived and ordained by the Supreme, it does not follow that he then existed. It is sufficient that he comes into being in his due time. Hence, the idea of man preceded his actual existence, 73-75. The last chapter of this book is on the heaven and its parts. Phronesis says, he conceives little about them, and thinks astronomers do but stammer with their bottomless loquacity. They say, there are seven planets, and above them place the starry heaven, and beyond this a ninth sphere; some a tenth, and some an eleventh. Below the moon the four elements are stationed, and whatever is composed of them, is the sphere of corruptible things; among these, comets, he thought, were generated by a celestial influence, as well as meteors, rainbows, hail and snow. All sublunary bodies receive impressions from the heavenly stars; but he thinks some dream a good deal; for, like Averroes, they maintain, there is such an exact regularity in the motion of the heavens, that if a single star were added or taken away, these would move with great labor and pain. He asserts, that physicians, astrologers and alchymists, alike make fictitious opinions on many points, of which they are wholly ignorant. So 'the natural philosophers' cannot tell whether an angel is joined to every sphere as its forma, or whether each orb be moved only by God. The probability is, that the Deity having once put it into circular motion, it moves then by itself. What necessity is there of our adding intelligences to moving orbs? He ends with declaring, that it is dangerous to dwell on these dreams of science, and that the mind may be better occupied in other things. We cannot doubt, that we owe to God a reckoning for all the employment of our strength and time in this life. It is therefore our duty and our interest to give them a good occupation, 75-78.

The third book begins with a discourse on the virtues. These

are divided into the natural and the moral ; of the latter, some are theological, as faith, hope and charity. He defines moral virtue to be an habit of choice, resting in a medium determined in us by some reason. To the four usual cardinal virtues, he adds five intellectual ones ;—wisdom, intellect, knowlege, art and prudence. Moral virtue is an habit given by God, rooted in the intellect of man, and distinct from custom. The virtues are again considered as existing in the intellect and the will. Phronesis declares, that it is impossible that moral virtue should be in man without the assisting grace of God ; and he asks, How can man deserve blessedness, even by living to please the Deity, unless the Supreme, from his great kindness, accept the effort ? No moral virtue can be such a merit as to deserve perpetual reward or praise ; because it must principally come from God. Faith should have three properties ; that it be only of truth, that it be above our sensible knowlege, that it be the basis of our coming to a quiet enjoyment of the things we believe. It is not built upon the contingent truths that concern human actions, but on those more fundamental ones which are connected with the present, the past, the future, the possible, and the inherent ; such as, that God exists ; that He is not unjust ; that He created the world ; that He will come to a final judgment ; that He cannot contradict Himself ; that He will beatifically reward His sanctified. No one can sin, but in proportion as he declines in faith, 79–85.

Hope is then considered, and also charity, or divine love ; this consists in that affection by which God is loved as he ought to be, and all his creation likewise, and it exhibits itself in a delighted observance of his commands. A man should love his God above all things ; and in all his actions should think continually of his duty to Him. If we like His works, we shall be attached to each other, and wish good to all with an effective volition. It is the same thing to love God, and to love His laws. His laws are Himself : they express His mind and will. Faith, hope and charity, all meet in the observance of the divine law, 25–89.

Sin, and its distinctions, both venial and mortal, are then discussed ; the endlessness of its evil, and its requiring an infinite power for its remission, p. 90–98.

Grace is considered as a spiritual quality : on the part of God, it is a conferred favor ; on the part of the creature, a passive acceptation. The predestinated receive it, and by that become acceptable to God. He thinks grace cannot fall away from any one, or it is not grace. He thinks it a vanity to say, that grace

CHAP.
V.

WRITINGS
AND OPI-
NIONS OF
WICLIFFE.

BOOK
VII.HISTORY
OF RELI-
GION IN
ENGLAND.

is not given absolutely to produce salvation, but is given congruously to facilitate man's deserving it. This is more foolish than the error of Pelagius. It is grossly simoniacal to suppose, that grace may be purchased like an ox or a horse, 90-101.

Phronesis thinks, that all things which happen, absolutely and necessarily happen; and that nothing could be produced or conceived but what has been so. But he places, as the anterior supposition, that God has so willed. 'I have declared, that this should be supposed as possible, if it shall please God; and His approbation being presumed, then I admit the assertion,' 102-104. The seven mortal sins and their opposite virtues, are afterwards dilated on, 105-151.

His prolocutors also discuss the proneness of man to sin; his previous state of innocence, and his fall; the necessity of our Saviour's incarnation and death, to produce human salvation. On original sin, Phronesis considers every man to have his own original sin, and not another's; and puts it as probable, that as many of human kind will be saved as there were angels that fell. Our Saviour's incarnation and excellent character are enlarged upon. None of the saints are to be praised, unless so far as they imitate Him; and His law is declared to transcend infinitely every other, 152-179.

The fourth book begins with a conversation on the seven sacraments of the Romish church. A sacrament is the sign of a sacred thing; the visible form of an invisible grace, to work out the similitude, and be the cause of its acquisition. But, as every creature indicates its creation and its Creator, every thing is a sign of Him, and may lead us to Him; and signifies to us our Creator, His creating, and His grace. Baptism is a sign of man's spiritual generation in God; confirmation, of the spiritual strength conferred; ordination, for the production of the clergy, and especially of priests; matrimony, for the diffusion of population; penitence, to expunge sin; and the eucharist, to re-establish the penitent; extreme unction concludes his earthly scene, 180-2. Each of these is treated of in order.

On the eucharist, he says, there was, in his days, 'dissensio plus brigosa.' The common experience of our senses shews, that the priest, going to the altar, makes or consecrates, from bread and wine, one sensible remaining thing, which the vulgar conceive to be our Saviour's body and blood. Some ancient and recent heretics deny this to be a sacrament, but these we must cautiously rebuke. The church, in its prayers, calls this thing commonly a

sacrament. The papal laws term it a sacrament, but not a thing. The doctors usually say, that it is, sacramentally, the body of Christ. The body is not visible there in its nature.

It is called a sacrament, because it is a sensible sign of the soul, deity, and grace of Christ. It is not naturally his body; it is the grace of his union with his church, which by this sensible sacrament is accessorially and efficaciously designated. There are many errors about it. Some say it is an accident without a subject; others, that it is nothing, as it is an aggregate of many accidents, which are not of one genus. 'Against these opinions I have many times inveighed, both scholastically and in the vulgar tongue; for this heresy plunders the public, makes it commit idolatry, and denies the faith of Scripture. I teach therefore briefly, that it is the body of Christ in the form of bread. They are but crafty heretics who say, That it is an accident, or nothing, and cannot be his body, altho his body is hidden in every atom of it; for if it be nothing, it is not even bread. The friars, more especially, defend these heresies, thereby defaming both pope, prelates, and all.' Wicliffe rests upon our Saviour's words, That it is bread as well as his body, for he calls it bread. Its character of bread is therefore not lost, tho it becomes to us sacramentally his body, 182-5. 'It remains bread after the consecration, as it was before,' 189.—'Est in natura sua verus panis; et sacramentaliter, corpus Christi.' 192. This subject is discussed at length, and its mode of identification, or spiritual effects, and some consequential distinctions, are considered, 193-212.

Baptism destroys whatever sin existed at the time of baptising; 213. No man can be saved without it, 217. He thinks confirmation to be founded on Scripture, by which we regularly receive the Holy Spirit, 222. On ordination, he remarks, that in the primitive church there were but two orders, priests and deacons; the popes, cardinals, patriarchs, archbishops, bishops, deans, archdeacons, and other official characters, have been added since, together with all the orders of monks and friars, 225.

The avarice of the clergy is then handled, 231; and as priests ought to be the root of righteousness, carrying the soul of the laity to heaven; and worldly cupidity is the root of all evils, those have greatly sinned who have endowed the church, having made it mercenary, worldly, and luxurious, 234-8. The three speakers confer on matrimony and divorce, 238-250; and on penance. All true penitence is in the mind alone. He disputes the papal power of binding and releasing. 'It is not the faith of the church

BOOK
VII.HISTORY
OF RELI-
GION IN
ENGLAND.

that the Pope is the true vicar of St. Peter, or will be saved. Let us, then, live in the faith of the Son of God, that is, in the law of his Scripture, and conform ourselves to it as much as we are able, and despise the presumptuous pomps of this sort of Anti-Christ,' 254.

After shortly noticing extreme unction, he proceeds to attack the friars, and their mendicity, which he shews to have no foundation in Scripture. Several chapters are devoted to expose the mental, moral, and social evils, which he thinks they produced, 261-296; and he urges temporal lords to defend their subjects against them, 297.

His last chapters are, on the resurrection; the future judgment; the endowments of the blessed, both in their new bodies and in their glorified minds; on the sufferings of the condemned; and on the interior and exterior senses of the beatified good, 301-318.

On these subjects, Alithia asks Phronesis to express his sentiments on man's future state. Tho it be the last in occurrence, it ought to be chief and the first in our thoughts, as it is the end to which, if we were prudent, we should apply all our life and labor. Phronesis thinks that all God's creatures will profit from it, accepted variously, according to their orders and conditions; but what is greater madness than to attend so much to frivolous traditions, and to disregard the precious divine law?

Our first supposition must be, that every man will rise again in a body, with his soul re-united to it, and to remain in it for ever. He comments on this with the substance of St. Paul's celebrated chapter on this awful yet interesting subject, 1 Cor. xv. Aristotle concurs in the opinion, that the Deity will reward the virtuous, but not in this life. This remuneration must be postponed till after death. The philosopher and the apostle coincide in teaching that the bad here will be punished hereafter. As a righteous Judge to all, from His necessary essence, He must do this; common justice enacts this difference to be made between the virtuous and the wicked, 301-4.

There must be an end to this human system of things, otherwise it would be eternal. As it does not become the great and universal Lord to multiply his judicial tribunals for every individual, there will be one last and general adjudication, and therefore an universal resurrection. Those that are predestinated to be saved, will meet their Saviour in the air; it will be otherwise with the condemned; but the terrible day seems to be getting near, but when it will precisely come, none but the foolish will be solicitous

to know. Tho our material substance will be varied, the same personality of the man will remain to the numeral identity of the soul; that, can be neither lessened nor increased, tho the body may be mutilated. God will finally ordain all things according to His own settled rule, 305-8.

The endowments of the beatified body are four; brightness, incorruptibility, fineness and agility. In the next world, their native country, they will have little earth or water; they will consist chiefly of air and fire. The bodies of the blessed are not heavy and gravitating downwards, like iron or lead, but are more agile than wind, bringing only delight, and never experiencing fatigue. Glorified bodies are indivisible; their natural action or sight is never impeded, but the Deity adapts in them a perpetual and consenting harmony. Their seven qualities are, beauty, swiftness, strength, liberty, health, pleasure and durability, 308-310.

The four chief endowments of the minds of the blessed, are subtility of genius, sagacity of invention, sufficient memory, and an unfailling power of perpetual activity. With these are united wisdom, friendship, concord, honor, power, security and joy. All the same powers and virtues of his soul will return in the new-raised man; every intellectual virtue of the blessed spirit, with the gift of God graciously conferred upon it, to be inherent in it. All the blessed will have the same beatitude and joy, for all will partake of the Divine nature. Hence the church pray, 'Be thou our joy, our rest, our future remuneration,' 310-314.

The pains of the condemned he thinks will be both corporeal and intellectual. They will not have the comfort of mutual consolation; their society will be that of beings raging against each other; their bodies will not be dissolvable by the fire they will suffer; but tho continually lacerated, will be continually re-united. There will be an afflux from pain from the mind to their senses. Their locality he places in the middle of the universe, as distant as possible from heaven, and deprived of light, and of every consolatory companionship, 314-316.

Of the senses of the beatified good, he thinks only sight and touch will be possessed; as there will be no food required, no taste will be necessary, nor any smell, as there will be no olfactory evaporation; nor hearing, as there will be no refraction of sound from any solid body. Their senses will partake of the purity of their new essence; all the powers of their souls will be perpetual, and in their most perfect operation, without torpidity or anxiety, 316-318.

BOOK
VII.HISTORY
OF RELI-
GION IN
ENGLAND.

Such a formidable attack could not be expected to be made unnoticed. In 1377, the Pope issued his commands to the archbishop of Canterbury and bishop of Lincoln, to cause Wicliffe to be arrested and examined, and to keep him in prison till further order;³³ and also letters to be issued, in case he could not be taken, citing him to appear at Rome, and answer for his offence.³⁴ The archbishop wrote to the chancellor of Oxford for full information on this subject, and summoned Wicliffe to appear at St. Paul's church before him.³⁵ In 1381, the same prelate issued an angry denunciation against John Ball, ordering his clergy to confound him, and to proclaim him excommunicated, and forbidding any to assist him.³⁶ In the next year, new mandates issued, reprobating the heretical opinions, and attacking four other persons as well as Wicliffe.³⁷ The king's writ was obtained to Oxford, ordering it to inquire and banish those who were suspected of heresy.³⁸ The chancellor of Oxford suspended Wicliffe from all scholastic acts.³⁹ Twelve doctors sat at Oxford, to condemn his opinions; and their letter in 1382 states, that Wicliffe had within a few years sowed the province of Canterbury thick with heresies; that he had produced so many heirs of his sect, that they could not, without the severest efforts, be eradicated; and that it had lately very

³³ See Pope's letter (Gregory II.) in Wilk. Conc. vol. 3. p. 116.—The Pontiff hints, that the opinions were the same, *mutatis terminis*, with those of Marsilii de Padua et Johannis de Gauduno. *Ib.*

³⁴ *Ib.* p. 117.

³⁵ *Ib.* pp. 123, 124.

³⁶ *Ib.* pp. 152, 153.—Knyghton says, that John Balle was the precursor of Wicliffe, as John the Baptist was of our Saviour. p. 2644.

³⁷ Nicholas Hereford, Philip Rappynghdon, Joh. Ashton, and Laur. Bedeman, *ib.* p. 160. They seem to have been all clergymen.

³⁸ *Ib.* p. 166.

³⁹ *Ib.* p. 170.

much increased.⁴⁰ Some of the accused were alarmed, and recanted.⁴¹ CHAP.
V.

The great instrument by which Wicliffe operated, was the Scriptures. He translated them into English, and by that means enabled laymen, and even women who could read, to become better acquainted with them, than many learned and intelligent clergymen used to be;⁴²—an important admission from a contemporary, who was a stout enemy of the reformation. Wicliffe found a powerful protector in John of Gaunt, the duke of Lancaster.⁴³ He was afterwards summoned to Oxford, where he appeared, and defended himself.⁴⁴ Preachers imbued with his opinions, started up in many places;⁴⁵ and several knights, lords, and even dukes, espoused them.⁴⁶ The citizens of London became for the most part Lollards,⁴⁷ as the new reformers were called. The sermons of the mendicant friars, formerly so admired, were undervalued; and the preaching from the new Scriptures made an universal impression.⁴⁸ WRITINGS
AND OPI-
NIONS OF
WICLIFFE.

Wicliffe, aware of the importance of vernacular instruction, was indefatigable upon that point. Besides his scholastic Trialogus, and his vernacular Bible, he also wrote his little familiar sermons or discourses called his Postils on the Gospels.⁴⁹ In these,

⁴⁰ Wilk. Conc. vol. 3. p. 171.

⁴¹ See Ryppendon, Ashton, Stokes, and Crompe's Abjurations, ib. p. 172.

⁴² 'Unde per ipsum fit vulgare et magis apertum laicis et mulieribus legere scientibus quam solet esse clericis admodum literatis et bene intelligentibus.' Knyghton, p. 2644.

⁴³ Ib. p. 2647.

⁴⁴ Ib. p. 2649.

⁴⁵ Ib. pp. 2655–2661.

⁴⁶ Erant etiam milites Dominus Thomas Latymer; Dominus Johannes Trussell; Dominus Ludowycus Clyfforde; Dominus Johannes Pecche; Dominus Ricardus Story; Dominus Reginaldus de Hylton; cum ducibus et comitibus. Knyght. p. 2661. The expression in the plural, of ducibus, goes very high, at a time when the dukes were few, and chiefly of the royal family.

⁴⁷ Wals.

⁴⁸ Knyght. 2665.

⁴⁹ These are in MS. in the Cotton Library, Claudius, D 8.

BOOK
VII.HISTORY
OF RELI-
GION IN
ENGLAND.

he takes every occasion to inculcate his new opinions. As specimens of his style in his native language, then in a rude state, a few passages may be cited. In one, he repels the slander, that the reformers were enemies of religion, and were political revolutionists; and laments their persecution.⁵⁰ In another, he attacks the love of worldly pomp and greatness of the popes and prelates; ⁵¹ he notices the cruelties used towards those who attempted to explore the truth; ⁵² he censures the custom of priests engaging in wars, especially in crusades; ⁵³ he throws out a sarcasm on the wealth accumulated by the friars, ⁵⁴ and on the prohi-

⁵⁰ The reader may be pleased to hear this great man in his own venerable but unformed English:—'And thus seyn thes folk to princes of the world, that thes heretikes (the Lollards) ben false men agenys holy religioun; and thei casten to destroye lordschipes and reumes; and therfore to maunde hem to be dede, or lette hem to speke. But lordes seyn agein, that thei scholden knowe the lawe that Holy Cherche hath to punishe such heretikes, and therefore thei scholden go forth and punishe hem bi here lawe. Bi suche execution of suche false prelatys and freris is Goddes lawe qwenchid and Antecristes arered. But God wolde that thes lordes passeden Pilat in this poynt, and knewen the treuthe of Goddes lawe in here moder tonge, and have this two folk in suspecte for here corsede lyvyng and hidyng of his lawe fro knowinge of seculeres: for bi this cautel of the fend ben manye trew men quen-chid.' Wick. Postils, MS.

⁵¹ And in this poynt synnen specially the grettiste of the Cherche; for thei suwen nat Christ here, but Antecrist and the world. Loke the pope first and his cardinals, whether thei taken no worldly worschipe, but ben the leste and the moost meke of alle othre. More foul pride and covetise is in no lord of the world. Go we to bischopis binethe thes and riche abbotis, fudris of coventis; and thes axen worldly worschipsis; and bi thus may men knowe hem.—And gif thou go down to freris that ben beggeris that scholden be mekest, more worschipe of ther brethren taketh no man in this world, as bi knelinge with kysinge of feet. Wic. MS. ib.

⁵² Sum men ben somoured to Rome, and there put in prisoun; and sum men ben cried as heretikes among the comune peple. And over thes, as men seyn, freris killen her owne brethren, and procuren men of the worlde to kille men that seyn hem trewthe. MS. ib.

⁵³ They defenden that it is leveful and meedful prestes for to fighte in cause that thei feynen Goddes. And so thei may move thes prestes to fighte ageins the gentile men, and as thei have robbed hem of temporal goodes, so thei wolden preive hem of sward. MS. ib.

⁵⁴ And thus it seemeth that newe ordres overcomen not this world bi bilieve that thei han in Crist, for he lyvede not as thei lyven now. He

bition to the laity to study the Scriptures, on the pretence that they were too sublime and too sacred.⁵⁵ But the great substance of the work is plain and useful lectures on the precepts and history of Christianity.

Many defenders of the existing hierarchy took up the pen against Wicliffe; and of these, William Wyddford, doctor of theology, was one of the most authorized opponents.⁵⁶ With all his ingenuity and learning, he had no other means of defence than to maintain the authority of tradition;⁵⁷ and he found that it would not be sufficient even to rest upon written traditions: the papal decrees had gone far beyond them; and this supporter of visible abuses, which reason could not justify, was obliged to assert, that, whether written or unwritten, they were, if received by the church, to be equally believed⁵⁸—nay, that even many things, which did not follow from any thing in Scripture or tradition, must yet be matters of faith, and ought not to be controverted⁵⁹—and that the interpretation on doubtful propositions of

purchacede noughte to his Aposteles, neither houses ne worldly godes, but taughte hem both in comoun or privee to flee suche havynge of the world. MS. ib.

⁵⁵ And seyn it falleth not to hem to knowe Goddis lawe, for thei seyn it is so heigh, so sotyl, and so holy, that only scribes and pharisees scholden speke of this lawe. MS. ib.

⁵⁶ See his work in MS. in the Harleian Library, N^o 31 & 42. He says in his dedication, that he wrote by the orders of the archbishop; and he dates his work from the castle of Framlyngham.

⁵⁷ Debemus credere, not only the Scripture, sed etiam traditionibus apostolicis per successiones patrum a tempore apostolorum usque ad nos, Wydff. MS. Harl. N^o 31.

⁵⁸ Debemus credere etiam veritatibus ab universali ecclesia acceptis, sive scribantur, sive non. Wydff. MS. Harl. N^o 31.

⁵⁹ Debemus credere multis veritatibus quæ ex contentis in sacræ Scripturæ non sequuntur nec extraditionibus apostolicis, eo quod ex predictis, vel aliqua illarum, et quibusdam aliis quæ in facto notoria consistunt et rationaliter non possunt tergiversari. Ib. MS. ib.

BOOK
VII.HISTORY
OF RELI-
GION IN
ENGLAND.

Scripture, given by Catholic doctors, ought to be believed to be their real meaning.⁶⁰

Extensive discussions ensued, and many combatants appeared, on both sides of the question. But amid the stormy debates, Wicliffe, under the powerful support of his great friends, died in peace at his rectory, praised for his talents and virtues, not only by his friends, but also by his enemies.⁶¹ Even under the reign of Henry IV. a letter appeared under the seal of the chancellor of Oxford and the assembly of its masters, addressed to the public, warmly applauding both his life and his abilities, and recommending his works.⁶² He died in 1384, December 28. But his disciples were indefatigable. Three years afterwards, we find the bishop of Worcester complaining, that “the eternally-damned sons of Anti-Christ, *the disciples and followers of Mahomet*, conspiring with a diabolical instigation, confederating together under the name of Lollards, and actuated by insanity, were pouring out their poison from their honeyed mouth, under the veil of great sanctity:”⁶³—From which we may infer, that these reformers were men of virtuous lives and mild manners, as well as of intelligent minds. All the severity of persecution that the church could use, short of death, was employed, but never favored

⁶⁰ Debemus credere interpretationibus Catholicorum doctorum de prepositionibus ambiguis sacræ Scripturæ. Ib. MS. ib.

⁶¹ Knyghton's character of him is very high: ‘Doctor in theologia eminentissimus in diebus illis. In philosophia nulli reputabatur secundus: in scholasticis disciplinis incomparabilis. Hic maxime nitebatur aliorum ingenia subtilitate scientiæ et profunditate ingenii sui transcendere, et ab opinionibus eorum variare.’ Knyght. p. 2644.

⁶² This mentions his ‘morum honestatem, sententiarum profunditatem et redolentis famæ suavitatem.’ They say, ‘Absit’ that our prelates should condemn for a heretic ‘a man of such probity, who, on logic, philosophy, theology, morals and metaphysics, has written without a peer in this university.’ Wilk. Conc. vol. 3. p. 302.

⁶³ Wilk. Conc. vol. 2. p. 202.

by Richard II. more than the power of the clergy could compel. In 1394, the inferences made by the reformers were presented to parliament.⁶⁴ The clergy continued their inquisitions and attacks; but the new opinions spread both to high and low: even the earl of Salisbury, one of Richard's last favorites, zealously protected them.⁶⁵ A contemporary, not their friend, declares that the sect so multiplied at this period, that you could scarcely meet two persons in the street but one was a Wicliffite.⁶⁶ If Richard II. had been a wiser sovereign, he might have conducted the improving spirit of his subjects to a happy issue; the ecclesiastical system would have been timely

CHAP.
V.

WRITINGS
AND OPI-
NIONS OF
WICLIFFE.

⁶⁴ See it in Wilk. Conc. p. 221.

⁶⁵ We will add to this part of our History the Oath which, in 1396, the hierarchy extorted from those who were suspected of Lollardism: it will shew the points which the Establishment was desirous to maintain: 'I William Dynot, before yow worshipfull fader and lord archbishop of Yhork and your clergie, with my fre will and full aysesed, swere to God and to all his seyntes upon this holy gossell, that fro this day forthward I shall worschip ymages with praying and offeryng unto them in the worschip of the saintes that they may be made after: And also I shall never more despise pylgremage ne states of holy chyrche in no degre: And also I shall be buxum to the lawes of holy chirche and to yhowe, as to myn archbishop, and to myn other ordinaries and curates, and kepe ye lawes upon my power, and meyntein them. And also I shall never more meyntein ne techen ne defend errours, conclusions, ne teching of the Lollards, ne swych conclusions and techings that men clepith Lollards doctryn; ne I shall her bokes, ne swych bokes, ne hem, or ony suspect or diffamed of Lollardery receyve or company withall wittinglye, or defend in tho matters; and if I knowe ony swych, I shall with all the haste that I may do, yhowe or els your ner officeres to wyten, and of ther bokes: And also I shall excyte and stirre all tho to good doctrine that I have hindred with myn doctryne up my power: And also I shall stand to your declaration which is heresy or errour, and do thereafter, and also what penance ye woll for that I have don for mayntenying of this fals doctryne enjoyne me, I shall fulfill it, and I submit me therto up my power: And also I shall make no other glose of this myn oth but as the words stonde: And if it be so that I com agayn or do agayn this othe, or ony party therof, I yelde me here cowpable as an heretike, and to be punished by the lawe as an heretike, and to forfeit all my godes to the king's will, withouten any other processe of lawe; and therto I require the notarie to make of all this, the which is my will an instrument against me.' Wilk. Conc. vol. 3. p. 225.

⁶⁶ Knyghton, p 266.

BOOK
VII.
—
HISTORY
OF RELI-
GION IN
ENGLAND.

reformed, as Wicliffe recommended; and the storms that agitated the country for another century might have been prevented or allayed. But, favoring the reformers, and at the same time offending his people, he gave the church the power of contributing largely to his dethronement. The new dynasty, which they mainly assisted to raise, joining with them to maintain all the abuses of the papal system, could not stand against the vindictive operation of the persecuted. The kingdom became convulsed in the struggle. But the house of York was enabled to depose the house of Lancaster, principally from the unpopularity to which the maintenance of the ecclesiastical corruptions and intolerance had subjected it.

But the important agencies of Wicliffe's mind were not confined to his own country; they not only enlightened England, but they electrified Bohemia. The marriage of Richard II. with a Bohemian princess, connected the two countries by a friendly intercourse. The queen's court was attended by several Bohemian knights and noblemen: she favored the principles of our reformer:⁶⁷ and one of our countrymen, who had studied at Oxford, taking with him into Bohemia the writings of Wicliffe, as a precious treasure, lent them to several persons, and among others to John Huss,⁶⁸ who was then residing at the newly established university at Prague. Huss was an able debater, and zealously embraced the opinions of Wicliffe.⁶⁹ Great discussions ensued; and we may

⁶⁷ Walsingham.

⁶⁸ We learn this fact from *Æneas Sylvius*, afterwards Pope Pius II., who mentions it in his *Historia Bohemica*, c. 35, p. 66. He and *Dubravius*, (*Hist. Boh.* p. 613) seem delighted to remark, that Huss signifies a Goose in Bohemian.

⁶⁹ *Avide admodum Wiclevitarum doctrinam arripuit. Æn. Silv.* p. 66.

infer the surprising number of the students at this place, by observing, that 5,000 of them left this town, and established another university at Leipsig.⁷⁰ Huss continued at Prague, promulgating the doctrines which he found in the books of Wicliffe, and asserting that they contained every truth.⁷¹ He obtained the *Triologus* of Wicliffe, already mentioned, and became more bold in maintaining the reforming opinions of his instructor.⁷² The archbishop of Prague ordered all those who had Wicliffe's books, to be cited, that they might give them up. More than two hundred were discovered; and so highly cherished, that most of them were found to be ornamented with gold or silver clasps.⁷³ He had them all burnt. But his hostilities were inefficacious. In Jerome of Prague, a master of arts at the same university, and who had also studied our reformer's lessons, Huss found an able and an active colleague.⁷⁴ The moral character of Huss gave weight to his instructions.⁷⁵

⁷⁰ *Æneas Sylv.* p. 66. This is in 1408. *Dubravius* says 24,000 students went away, p. 614; the other number is far more probable. It is added in his marginal annotations, 'Thus Leipsig was a colony of Prague, as Prague was of Paris.' The University of Prague was founded in 1347.

⁷¹ *Æn. Syl.* p. 66.—Huss was born in 1373, of poor parents: in 1393 he was made bachelor, and 1396 master of arts at Prague; a priest and preacher at a chapel there, in 1400; and doctor of the academy in 1409; in 1400 he was confessor to the queen of Bohemia. *L'Enfant, Hist. Counc. Constance*, p. 25.

⁷² *Dubrav. Hist. Boh.* 615.

⁷³ *Ib.* p. 616.

⁷⁴ *Ib.* 617. *Æneas* thus distinguishes the two men: 'Huss ætate et authoritate major habitus; doctrina et facundia superior.' *Hieronymus*, c. 36. p. 72.

⁷⁵ *Æneas* says of Huss, that he was *lingua potens et mundioris vitæ opinione clarus*. p. 66. The jesuit *Balbinus* thus describes Huss: 'He was more subtle than eloquent; but the modesty and severity of his manners, his unpolished, austere, and entirely blameless life; his pale thin face; his good nature and his affability to all, even to the meanest persons, were more persuasive than the greatest eloquence.' *Balb. Epit. Rer. Boh. ap. L'Enfant*, p. 24.

BOOK
VII.HISTORY
OF RELI-
GION IN
ENGLAND.

Indeed as it was then almost certain that death would be the reward of such noble-minded men, none but the conscientious would attempt the perilous task. When we recollect that both these reformers were burnt alive, it is interesting to read how just and useful most of their opinions were, as described by their enemy, who identifies them with those of the Waldenses.⁷⁶

To complete our idea of the importance of Wicliffe, it is only necessary to add, that as his writings made John Huss the reformer of Bohemia, so the writings of John Huss⁷⁷ led Martin Luther to be the reformer of Germany; so extensive and so incalculable are the consequences which sometimes follow from human actions.⁷⁸

⁷⁶ Æneas Syl. 67. He thus enumerates what he calls their pestiferous dogmas:—That the Roman pontiff was like other bishops; no difference among priests: That not the dignity, but the merit of the life, gives the distinction: That there is no purgatory: That it is useless to pray for the dead: That images of God and the saints should be destroyed: That holy water was ridiculous: That bad dæmons invented the religion of the mendicant friars: That priests should not be rich: That the preaching the word of God should be free: That neither confirmation, nor extreme unction, are sacraments: That auricular confession was absurd: That baptism should be with water, without any consecrated oil: That sacerdotal paraphernalia were of small importance: That it was vain to pray to the saints, because they cannot help us: That there should be no holydays but Sundays: That fasting was not meritorious, &c. Æn. Sylv. pp. 67–69.

⁷⁷ Luther's own account of the impression he received from the works of Huss is this: 'When I studied at Erfurd,' says Luther, 'I found in the library of the convent, a book, intituled, The Sermons of John Huss: I had a great curiosity to know what doctrines that arch heretic had propagated. My astonishment at the reading of them was incredible: I could not comprehend for what cause they burnt so great a man, who explained the Scriptures with so much gravity and dexterity. But as the very name of Huss was held in so great abomination, that I imagined the sky would fall, and the sun be darkened, if I made honorable mention of him, I shut the book with no little indignation. This, however, was my comfort, that he had written this perhaps before he fell into heresy; for I had not yet heard what had passed at the Council of Constance.' Luther's Preface to the Works of Huss, L'Enfant, p. 27.

⁷⁸ Luther is not sufficiently known in England for his literary talents, and vernacular compositions. We may estimate these by the following

notice of them by Baron Grimm; a person not likely to over-value them. 'Luther lui-même est le premier écrivain Allemand, en rang ainsi qu'en date. Son style est pur et naturel. Aussi est-il parmi nous d'une autorité classique; sa poésie est pleine de noblesse, de jeu et de force.' Grimm's Supplement, p. 8. 'Ce fut Luther, qui joignit, le premier, la pureté de la langue et l'exactitude de l'expression au feu et à la force de la poésie. Son langage est bien celui des Dieux, et après deux cents ans il n'a rien perdu de sa beauté, à l'exception de quelques mots énergiques. Luther n'était pas seulement poète, il connaissait aussi les règles de beaux arts, et il en savait donner lui-même. Ses lettres sur l'art de traduire et d'interpréter, sur les spectacles et leur moralité, sont autant de monumens précieux de son goût et des connaissances.' p. 22.

CHAP.
V.

WRITINGS
AND OPINIONS OF
WICLIFFE.

BOOK VIII.

*History of English Poetry, from the Twelfth Century
to the middle of the Fifteenth.*

 CHAP. I.

THE ENGLISH POETS WHO PRECEDED GOWER.

BOOK
VIII.

THE history of English poetry, from its first appearance in the twelfth century, to the middle of the fifteenth, begins with Layamon, and ends with Lydgate. This period embraces nearly four centuries; the principal writers who flourished in it, were—Layamon, Robert of Gloucester, Brunne, Hampole, Gower, Chaucer, John the Chaplain, Occleve, and the Monk of Bury. The literary cultivation that preceded and accompanied them, assisted to produce their merit; their minds were portions of the stream of intellectual improvement, which, from the Norman Conquest, never ceased to flow thro England: they were individual examples of the great national progress, expressing its nature, implying its sources, and hastening and facilitating its future march.

Poetry always exhibits the most perfect state of the language of the day, and is the most efficacious instrument of extending and refining it; of enriching it with new graces, fixing it with increased accuracy, and diversifying and animating it with meanings, feelings, spirit, flexibility, and imagery, unknown to it before. Being every where composed in some form

CHAP.
I.ENGLISH
POETS WHO
PRECEDED
GOWER.

of a metrical position of words, which every phrase will not suit, it compels a selection of language from its makers; and their minds, thus accustomed, even in its humblest examples, to chuse expressions more fit than others, become necessarily more critical and discriminating as to the application and meaning of their language, and gradually in their taste. Hence the valuable poems of all nations are superior in diction and expression to their prose; superior in energy, force, precision, and pathos, as well as in those figures, turns, and graces, which poetry claims as its peculiar property and rightful inheritance. Our ancient vernacular poetry decidedly excelled its contemporary prose.

Poetry, whenever it soars above mere verbal versification, is the effusion of the sensibilities, or of the sportive imagination of mankind, or of that inborn love for the superior, the beautiful and the grand which distinguishes human nature, expressed in this selected phrase. Whether religion, love or war, indolence or intellect, was its first parent, it originated, on every supposition, from the excited feelings of mankind, kindling the fancy, and rousing or elevating congenial energies. Its finest compositions in every age are those which have been the produce of actual sensibility; and their genuine effect is to excite in the reader consentaneous emotions. No artificial versifications of the memory or reasoning thought, alone, can so affect us. Reasoning excites us to reason and to judge. But feeling only awakens feeling, and produces the poetry which attracts the sympathy, gratifies the cultivated taste, and never loses its magical interestingness. The most esteemed species of genuine poetry is therefore the language of the heart,

BOOK
VIII.HISTORY OF
ENGLISH
POETRY.

addressed to the heart ; and, from the universal likeness of human nature, is every where intelligible and every where delightful.

All mankind feel, or are created to feel ; but all do not equally cultivate their sensibilities. Nor can these emotions be operating with equal force at all times in the same individual. The mind cannot be perpetually excited without destruction. Its agitations must be far less frequent than its repose ; or the unknown connexion between the intellectual principle and the bodily organization will be destroyed. Human life is also, happily for its comfort, not always so disturbed as to kindle the passions or affect the sympathies, in all its incidents. Its usual course is monotony ; or individual apathy or quiet ; or activity without interest or impression. The mind loves tranquillity as well as emotion, and more generally subsides into it. In this state it seeks to please and be pleased, without perturbation ; to be lulled, not agitated ; to be soothed and amused, without labor or pain ; to contemplate or create the beautiful, the agreeable, and the gay, instead of being elevated by the sublime, startled by the horrible, roused by the dangerous, or distressed by the pathetic. It possesses one charming faculty, which suits and gratifies this favorite indolence, the delightful FANCY ; that fairy maker of ideal beings and ideal scenery, which can select all that is good and pleasing in this world, and combine the interesting fragments into prospects, characters, incidents, and converse, far more beautiful and impressive than daily humanity presents to us. Magical artist ! whom no labor can weary ; no failure discourage : ever borrowing the pencil of hope, to paint even the brief future of this world, radiant with splendors which

nature never imparts ; and flattering with every coveted felicity which experience cannot realize.¹

From this part of the intellect, poetry obtained new subjects, new sentiments, and a boundless region for its activity and creations. Perhaps in this quality, its leading excellencies, its wonderful nature, principally appear. If it merely repeated what the mind has actually heard and seen, it would be but like the painter, who, viewing the dying malefactor, depicted faithfully his writhing limbs and distorted countenance ; or who, sitting placidly in more agreeable scenery, represents in colors the exact peach he handles, or the bunch of grapes and vine-leaves that he sees hanging before him. While poetry merely versified history or biography, as in the rimed chronicles, or the lives of the saints, it was only metrical phrase. It was not till, abandoning the real world, it deviated into the fictitious ; it was not till it invented characters and incidents ; not till it sang of imaginary Arthurs, Rolandoes and Charlemagnes ; not till it connected natural feelings with supposed situations ; not till it fancied as well as felt ; that its unlimited genius and distinguishing nature appeared ; and from that hour it has never lost its hold on the human affections, and never been without either admirers or offspring. Hence, poetry had little to do with Wace or Gaimar ; with Robert of Gloucester, or Piers Langtoft, in their elaborate histories. But it began to exist in Wace's *Chevalier au Lion*, in Benoit's *Trojan poem*, in the *Troubadour* poetry, and in Marie's lays.

CHAP.
I.

ENGLISH
POETS WHO
PRECEDED
GOWER.

¹ Sir Philip Sidney says beautifully, ' Nature never set forth the earth in so rich tapestry, as divers poets have done ; neither with so pleasant rivers, fruitful trees, sweet-smelling flowers ; nor whatsoever els may make the too much loved earth, more lovely. Her world is brazen. The poets only deliver a golden.' *Defence of Poesie*, p. 543.

BOOK
VIII.HISTORY OF
ENGLISH
POETRY.

But in addition to the feeling and the fancy, the intellect possesses also its ordinary power of miscellaneous thought; and poetry, besides interesting mankind with its superior subjects and produce, became also connected with this, the most usual occupation of the mind. The poet, accustomed to clothe his emotions and imaginations with metrical language, could not, from the mere laws of habit and inclination, avoid giving his other associations the same form of expression; and the world, delighted with poetry of the higher species, has always welcomed its diction in every other combination. Hence the poetical style has been, in every age, associated with the REASON as well as with the sensibility and the fancy. Indeed we may expect to find it oftener united with the common level and subjects of thought, because the ordinary combinations of the mind most frequently recur, and require less genius to express.

Thus in every nation which has successfully pursued this delightful art, there is the poetry of sensibility, the poetry of fancy, and the poetry of the cultivated mind in all its other exertations. In the first ages of literature, we rarely meet with either alone. Sometimes, as in Wace's *Estories*, Brunne's *Chronicle*, and Piers Plouhman's *Visions*, we have the last kind, unmingled, unenlivened with either of the former: sometimes, as in Marie's lays, the imaginative appears: and sometimes, as in Gower, Chaucer, and Lydgate, the same individual exhibits all. Their long poems present to us an artless miscellany of feeling, imagination, and reasoning mind; the latter indeed far more abundant than the others, and which was fully as precious, often perhaps more so, to its author. From this confused and indiscriminated mixture, all

our old poets are in some parts highly interesting; and in others as dull. To themselves and to their own age the whole of what they wrote may have been pleasing and beneficial. Indeed, altho Gower may have emptied all his common-place book into his *Confessio Amantis*, as Warton has jocosely said, who in his history of poetry has rather too much done so himself, yet our older bard's work was not therefore less valuable or acceptable to his contemporaries. The studied thoughts of a cultivated individual are superior to those of the illiterate mind; and a rude age, in which few have learned to think, or think to any purpose, gratefully receives and eagerly applauds all that its mental benefactors pour forth. Such an age wants reasoning and knowlege and mind, of every shape and kind; and when these invaluable benefits are presented to it, worded in phrases which it can understand, and made attractive to its memory and natural love of melody by rime or metre, it welcomes every thing too warmly to discriminate, and profits from all too largely to criticise. Hence the first poetry of a nation will be promiscuous; will contain light and shade, beauties and deformities, in no order but that of succession, and put together without judgment or effect. It is not only to Layamon, Brunne, and Hampole, but even to Gower, Chaucer and Lydgate, that this character is applicable. In these latter, tho the princes of our ancient poetry, the interesting and the trifling incident; characters and scenery; logic, history, and fable; sentiment and prolixity; slovenly and felicitous expressions and thoughts; flashes of fancy, and tedious memory; all the spirit of genius, and dulness the most prosaic; occur together without any judicious arrangement, any foreseeing taste, any

CHAP.
I.

ENGLISH
POETS WHO
PRECEDED
GOWER.

BOOK
VIII.HISTORY OF
ENGLISH
POETRY.

knowledge of effect, or even perceptible discrimination, in the author's mind, between the various merits of his dissimilar materials.

Good poetry, like all valuable literature, tends to improve both the future author and the public taste. Altho at first the whole of the productions of the poet may please, yet in time a mental separation or decomposition begins. Whatever is mere reasoning, becomes familiar to his countrymen, and a part of the ordinary mind of every cultivated individual. These parts cease to interest, because no longer new or informing, unless they happen to be expressed with a select and happy diction, superior to what the public can generally imitate or actually possesses. Failing in this requisite, the bulk of Gower and Chaucer has undergone its fate. The world whom they have taught, has improved beyond the tuition. It is true that the most common thoughts, if expressed with peculiar beauty and felicity of phrase, will neither weary nor become obsolete, until the same thoughts become still more successfully invested with language by some succeeding writer. But this is a contingency that is perpetually happening; and therefore a large proportion of former poetry is always passing into oblivion, even of that which has been most admired by preceding taste. But those parts which delight the fancy and affect the heart, especially the latter, have a natural immortality; and for this sufficient reason, that whenever read or repeated, they always reproduce in the mind those effects which it is gratifying to feel; they are the addition of so much pleasure to life, whenever perused or recollected. Hence, while the poetry of mere reason is in its nature perishable and transient; while even that of fancy may have its day, and be forgotten,

because future imaginations may combine pictures more fascinating; and Chaucer's Parliament of Fowles, and the Flower and the Leaf, are in this predicament; yet the poetry of the heart is that poetry which changes of manners or lapse of time are least likely to destroy. Its source is nature; it acts on nature; and may survive as long as nature continues.

CHAUCER
I.
ENGLISH
POETS WHO
PRECEDE
GOWER.

But when the poets, whom we are about to enumerate, had improved the public mind so far as to enable it to make the distinction between their imperfections and their merits, their poems became only partially interesting. Passages after passages dropped out of the memory of their countrymen. As Chaucer had found himself more interested with some parts of Brunne, Gower, and Dante, than with others, so succeeding writers remembered his beauties, and reproached and neglected his defects. Some improved in metre, some in taste, some in fable, some in feeling, some in judgment, and some in expression. Thus in every age new favorites arise, and old ones are forgotten. The recent genius, illuminated and enriched by the excellencies of his predecessors, imitates what is good, without intending imitation; and, starting from the elevation to which anterior intellects have raised human improvement, has the chance of soaring to higher beauties, and of leading the way to new regions of fancy, and nobler combinations of feeling and thought.

But besides its high merit as a composition of feeling and fancy, and of the most select language and cultivated mind, Poetry stands forward to our admiration and love, as the great civilizer and instructress of mankind. In the ancient world, she performed

BOOK
VIII.HISTORY OF
ENGLISH
POETRY.

this noble office from the lips of Orpheus, Musæus, Hesiod, Homer, Terpander, and Tyrtæus; of Phocylides, Euripides, Sophocles, and Pindar; of Lucilius, Horace, Virgil, Juvenal, and others, whom the classical memory gratefully recollects. Aspiring always to soar beyond the imperfect present, her characters, phrase, sentiments, invention and imagery, have in every age been the most efficacious preceptors of morals and manners to mankind. Usually expressed with a terseness which arrests the attention, and fixes itself on the memory; clothed in language, pleasing from its melody, or compelling admiration by its happy imagery, or uttered by personages, or in incidents, that have already affected our hearts; the moral lessons of poetry have always been the first learnt, the easiest recollected, and the most willingly obeyed. The poet is the only teacher whom we sincerely like. He is the moral sovereign whom we most naturally obey, and whose reign the promiscuous world has rarely attempted to dispute.

And whatever may have been the subjects, the aims, or the caprices, of many of their successors, our oldest poets have a claim to be considered as the moral instructors of their countrymen. A proud distinction! If excellence be a subject delightful to contemplate, it must be still more interesting to produce it. Every writer, whose works improve his species, increases the happiness as well as the virtue of the world. Some of the more highly gifted intellects among our countrymen, have had this object distinctly in their contemplation; and with this class, in which Shakespear, Milton, Young, Thomson, Pope, and Cowper are conspicuous, must be ranked those,

whose ruder and more ancient efforts we proceed to notice.² CHAP. I.

The Anglo-Norman rimers had accustomed the taste of the English clergy and nobility to that easy and simple style of narrative verse, which marks the rimed chronicles and romances of Wace, Benoît, and Gaimar.³ But when the separation of England from Normandy, and increasing national antipathy, had occasioned a disuse of Norman French in this country, a new vernacular literature was wanted by those who valued any. The taste for reading had been created, and it was become one of the indispensable luxuries of the less occupied great. But from what source should this vernacular English literature at first be taken, but from the most popular and the most accessible? The Anglo-Norman had both these qualities. It was in the libraries of all who made books a part of their state or pleasures, and its reputation was universal. The first English writers accordingly resorted to it; and the translation of the Anglo-Norman chronicles, lives of saints, romances, and moral treatises, became for a while as fashionable as their original composition. The new generation springing up, to whom French was as strange as Latin, desired to be acquainted with the treasures which their forefathers had valued; and this taste occasioned a transfusion of the Anglo-Norman mind and style into the rude English intellect and language, which, by this means, soon became superior to their preceptors.

ENGLISH
POETS WHO
PRECEDED
GOWER.

² We may recollect with pleasure our Sidney's noble sentiment: 'As virtue is the most excellent resting place for all worldly learning to make his end of; so poetry, being the most familiar to teach it, and most princely to move towards it, is, in the most excellent work, the most excellent workman.' *Defence of Poesie*, 552.

³ See before, vol. iv, p. 222—5.

BOOK
VIII.HISTORY OF
ENGLISH
POETRY.Layamon's
metrical
history.

One of these Anglo-Saxon translators and trans-
fusers was Layamon, a well-known name.⁴ But it has
not yet been remarked, that no work shews more
satisfactorily than his Chronicle, the benefits which
English poetry and literature have derived from the
Anglo-Norman. In this composition we see a poem
substantially Anglo-Saxon, but with none of that pe-
culiar style of Anglo-Saxon mind and phrase which
were its pervading characteristics. It is the simple
style of the Anglo-Norman poetry transferred into the
Anglo-Saxon: hence, it presents to us the first state
of our vernacular English poetry, divested of the in-
versions, transitions, obscurities, and metaphors of the
Anglo-Saxon school, and approaching that form of
easy and natural phrase which has been the nurse of
our truest poetry and cultivated intellect. Arthur's
account of his dream⁵ may be cited and read as an

⁴ This historical poem exists in MS. in the Cotton Library, Calig. A 9, and Otho, C 13. He states himself to have been a priest, who resided at Ernleage, on the Severn. He says, that he composed his work from three books; from Bede's History; from St. Alban's and Austin's; and from Wace, 'the French clerk that well knew how to write, and gave it to the noble Eleanor, that was Henry's queen.' MS. Calig. A 9.

⁵ ARTHUR lai alle longe niht,
And spac with thene geonge cniht,
Swa naver nillde;
Ne him sugge
Soth hu hit ferde.

Tha hit was dai margen,
And dugethe gon sturien.
Arthur tha up aras,
And strehte his armes.
He aras up and adun sat;
Swilc he weore swithe seoc.

Tha axede hine an vair cniht,
'Lauerd hu havest thu waren to
niht?'

Arthur tha answarede,
A mode him was unethe.
'To niht a mine slepe,
Ther ich lay on bure,
Me imatte a sweven;

ARTHUR lay all the long night,
And speech with that young knight,
So never would he have;
Nor say to him
Truly how it went.

Then it was day in the morning,
And the nobles began to stir.
Arthur then rose up,
And stretched his arms.
He rose up and sat down;
Indeed he was very sick.

Then asked him a true knight,
'Lord! how hast thou been to-
night?'

Arthur then answered,
And his mind was uneasy to him.
'To-night in my sleep,
Where I lay on my bed,
I dreamt a dream;

illustration of these remarks ; and as a specimen of the improvement of mind and style which English com-

CHAP.

L.

ENGLISH
POETS WHO
PRECEDED
GOWER.

Thervore ich ful sari am.
Me imette that men me hof
Uppen are halle.
Tha halle ich gon bestriden,
Swulc ich wolde riden.
Alle tha lond tha ich ah ;
Alle ich therover sah.
And Walwain sat bivoren me ;
Mi sweord he bar au honde.
Tha cam Moddred faren there
Mid unimete volke.
He bar an his honde
Ane wiæx stronge.
He bigon to hewene,
Hardliche swithe,
And tha postes forheon alle
Tha beolden up tha halle.
Ther ich iseh Wenhever eke,
Wimmonnen leofvest me.
Al there mucche halle rof
Mid hire hondeden heo to droh.
Tha halle gon to halden,
And ich hald to grunden,
That mi riht arm to bræt.
Tha seide Modred, Have that.
Adun veol tha halle ;
And Walwain gon to nalle,
And feol a there eorthe,
His armes brekeen beithe.
And ich igrap mi sweord leofe
Mid mire leofst heoude,
And smæt of Modred is hafð,
That hit wend a thene veld.
And tha Quene ich al to snathde
Mid deore mine sweorede,
And seo dethen ich heo adun sette
In ane swarte putte.
And all my volc riche
Sette to fleme ;
That niste ich under Criste
Whir hor bicumen weoren.
But in hmi seof ich gond astonden
Uppen ane wolden,
And ich ther wondren agon,
Wide gethd than moren.
Ther ich isah gripes
And gresliche fugeles.
Ther coman guldene Leo ;
Lither over driven
Deoren swithe hende.

Thereof I am full sorry.
I dreamt that men raised me
Up on the hall.
The hall I began to bestride,
As if I would ride.
All the land then I had ;
I there saw over all.
And Walwain sat before me ;
My sword he bare in his hand.
Then came Modred to go there
With innumerable people.
He bore in his hand
A strong battle-axe.
He began to hew
Very hard like,
And all the posts cut down
That held up the hall.
There I saw Gwenhever,
The dearest of all women to me.
All the roof of that great hall
With her hands she drew down.
Then I went to hold the hall,
And I held it to the ground,
That my right arm broke.
Then said Modred, ' Take that.'
Down fell the hall ;
And Walwan went headlong,
And fell to the earth,
With both his arms broken.
And I grasped my loved sword
With my left hand,
And smote off Modred's head,
That it went into the field.
And the Queen I cut to pieces
With my dear sword,
And her corpse I set down
In a black pit.
And all my great people
Set themselves to flight ;
That I knew not under Christ
Where they were gone.
But I myself stood beyond
Up on a wild,
And there I began to wonder,
Gazing on the wide moor.
I there saw devouring
And grisly birds.
Then came a golden Lion ;
Swiftly he drove over
The deer very eagerly.

BOOK
VIII.HISTORY OF
ENGLISH
POETRY.

position derived from its Anglo-Norman masters. To feel how great a revolution in our literature was thus begun, the reader may refer to the extracts which have been given in a former work, from the poetry of the Anglo-Saxons. The Dream of Arthur has a title to be considered as poetry, because, however rudely expressed, it is entirely a fiction of the imagination, and displays more invention than our versifying chroniclers usually attempted, or have expressed at all in so small a space.

We must place Layamon after 1155:⁶ and as Nor-

Tha ure drihten make
Tha Leo me orn foren to,
And iveng me bithan midle,
And forthe hire gun geongen,
And to there sa' wende;
And ich sah tha vthen.
I there sa driven;
And the Leo ithan ulode.
Iwende mid me seolve,
Tha wet i sah comen.
Tha uthen me hire binomen;
Com then an fisc lithe,
And ferede me to londe.
That was al ich wet,
And weri of sorgen,
And seoc.

Tha gon ich iwakien,
Swithe ich gon to quakien;
Tha gon ich to bruen
Swule ich at fur burne:
And swa ich habbe al niht,
Of mine swevene swithe ithot.
Fer ich what to iwisse,
Agon is al mi blisse.
For a to mine live,
Sorgen ich met drige.
Wale that ich matte here,
Wenhaver mine quene.'

Tha answarede the cniht,
'Lauerd, thou havest no riht,' &c.

MS. Calig. A 9.

Then our Lord made
That the Lion ran towards me,
And seized me by the middle,
And forth began to stride,
And turned to the sea;
And I saw the waves.
To the sea I was driven;
And the Lion then howled.
Thinking with myself,
Then I saw the water come.
The waves there took me;
But a fish quickly came,
And carried me to land.
Then was I all wet,
And weary from sorrow,
And sick.

I began then to wake,
And greatly to quake;
I began then to glow
As if I were burnt with fire:
And so I have all night,
On my dream greatly thought
For I knew from it this,
Gone is all my bliss.
For the rest of my life,
Sorrow I must suffer.
I grieve that I have not here,
Gwenhever my queen.'

Then answered the knight,
'My Lord! thou art wrong,' &c.

⁶ The date of Wace's work, from which Layamon professes to have taken his own. Mr. Ellis mentions 1180 as the earliest date that can be assigned to Layamon. Spec. Eng. Poetry, vol. 1. p. 76. I would postpone it till after 1200.

CHAP.

I.

ENGLISH
POETS WHO
PRECEDED
GOWER.

mandy was not severed from England till after 1200, I would not date the rise of English composition before that period, because the great, whose encouragement has been the chief producing cause of our literature, were not previously interested to reward any other than the Anglo-Norman, in which they had been studiously educated.⁷ From the time of Layamon, English versification began to be cultivated in various branches. We have an evangelical history, the lives of saints, satirical ballads, moral ballads, songs, and a larger satire, that were composed when our vernacular poetry first began to acquire a definite shape.⁸ The historical Chronicle of Robert of Gloucester, written about 1280, affords a still ampler specimen of our poetical diction at that early period. The eclipse in 1264, which he states that he saw, attests the chronology of his life.⁹

Robert or
Gloucester's
Chronicle.

Between Layamon and Robert of Gloucester may be placed a poem, consisting of a dialogue between an Owl and a Nightingale, disputing for superiority. It deserves notice, as one of those which marks the

The dialogue
of the Owl
and Night-
ingale.

⁷ Apud ducem Neustriæ educatur, eo quod apud nobilissimos Anglos, usus teneat filios suos *apud Gallos nutriri*, ob usum armorum et *lingue native barbariem tollendam*. Gerv. Tilb. otia imper.

⁸ For these works the reader may consult Mr. Warton's History of English Poetry; Mr. Ellis's Specimens of our Ancient Poets; and Mr. Tyrwhitt's Introduction to Chaucer's Canterbury Tales.

⁹ He thus describes it:—

As in the North-West a dark weather there arose,
Suddenlike swart enow that many man agros,
And overcaste it thro all that lond that men might unneth see,
Grisloker weather than it was, ne mighte an erthe be.
And few drops of rain there fell great enow,
This tokninge wel in this lond, tho me this men slou
Vor thirty mile then. *This I saw Roberd*
That first this book made, and was well sore aferd.

Hearne's Rob. Gl. p. 560.

BOOK
VIII.HISTORY OF
ENGLISH
POETRY.Brunne's
poems.

stage of the transformation of the Anglo-Saxon into English poetry.¹⁰ It is not so ancient as Layamon, but it retains Saxon enough to belong to the period of transition from the Anglo-Saxon to English. It is also curious for being one of our oldest original compositions, and for the successful efforts which it occasionally exhibits to form the true rhythm of English poetry. A few passages may be quoted of its happiest metre,¹¹ and one, in which the Owl's boast of her merit, alludes to some of the superstitious prognostications of the day.¹²

From 1300, English poetry attained a certain and definite existence. At this period Robert de Brunne, or Robert Mannyng, appears to us well known for his metrical Chronicle of England, translated in its first part from Wace, and in its second from the French of his contemporary Piers de Langtoft;¹³ but

¹⁰ It is in MS. in the Cotton Library, Calig. A 9, and begins thus:—

Ich was in one sunny dale,
In one snowy dighele hale,
And heard ich holde grete tale
An hule and one nightingale,
That pleit was stif and starc and
strong,
Sume wile soft and loud among—

¹¹ 'Thou singest a night and
nought a day;
And al this song is, wail away.
Vor harpe and pipe and fugeles
songe

Misliketh, gif it is too long.
Among the wood, among the netle,
Thou sittest and singest behinde
the setle.

Thou nart fair, no thou nart strong,
Ne thou nart thick, ne thou nart
long.' MS. Cal. A 9. ib.

¹² For ich am witifol I wis,
An wot all that to kumen is.
Ich wot of hunger; of hergonge;
Ich wot gif men shall live longe.
Ich wat gif wif luste her make,
Ich wat where shall be nith and
wrake.

Ich wot who shall beon anhonge,
Other elles, foul death afonge;
Gif men habbeth bataile iwinne,
Ich wot whether shal beon over-
kumme.

Ich wat gif cwalm shall come on
erfe,
And gif deor shall ligge and starve.
Ich wot gef treeson shall blowe;
Ich wat gef cornes shall grow.

MS. ib.

¹³ This latter part was printed by Hearne, from which Mr. Ellis has given some extracts, pp. 115 and 118. The last is an instance of the genuine ballad metre.

not sufficiently known to us for a work that has been contemptuously passed over, tho it marks an æra of the history of our poetry. The reader will not perhaps be much more delighted than Brunne's former critics, to learn that this poem, which we venture to recommend to his notice, is a translation of a Manuel des Peches, 'a handlyng of sinne:'¹⁴ and indeed if it were no more than a code of monkish morals, it might deserve his disrespect. But it is monkish morality illustrated by tales; and these tales are sometimes narrated with circumstances which make them approach far nearer to real poetry, than any thing which appears in this author's printed chronicle. They give us some of the most ancient specimens we have of English tales in verse, and may have contributed to form the mind, and to suggest the subject of the English poem of Gower, which resembles it for its mixture of ethics and stories, tho different in subject and superior in merit. As they have never been quoted, and still remain in manuscript, and will probably never be printed, a few specimens may be acceptable from an author, who may be deemed the father of that narrative poetry which Chaucer, Spenser, Dryden, and some of our contemporaries, have so highly cultivated.

His Tale of the Lady, "a lordys wyfe," who loved "feyre tyfying," tho it may excite a smile for the judgment of the moralist, who punishes so severely

CH/
I.
—
ENGLIS
POETS
PRECEI
GOWER

Tales fr
Brunne's
Manuel
desPech

¹⁴ It is in MS. in the Harleian Library, N° 1701. Its beginning states it to have been commenced in 1303:—

Dane Felyp was master that tyme	In that tyme turnede y wis
That y began thys Englyssh ryme.	On Englyssh tunge out of frankys,
The yere of grace fyl than to be	Of a boke as y fonde ynne, [synne.
A thousand thre hundred and thre.	Men clepyn the boke, handlyng

BOOK
VIII.HISTORY OF
ENGLISH
POETRY.

the preference for a fine head-dress, yet is better told than any thing we have in verse, before Gower :—

WHEN she was dead, soon afterward
Her Squyer took a syknes hard :
As he lay in his bed a night
Him thought his lady com to him ryght,
And said thus : “ Rise, and go with me,
“ A merveyly shall I show to thee.”

Thy sicke man graunted her noght,
For it ran well him in thoght,
That she was dead, and laid in grave,
That him of his bedde would have.
But whether he would or noght, with wel and wo,
She had him up with her to go.

She led him to a moche folde ;
So great one never he behelde.
Then stod stil this lady ;
And he by her ful dreadfully.
As they had stonde but a throwe,¹⁵
Come furth Devils that fast gan blowe.
With them they broght a burning wheel,
That on her head was set eche deyl.
This wheel that was set on her head,
Burnt her all that noght was leaved.

Efte¹⁶ she rose, when she was brent,
And had the same turment ;
And burned ryght as she did before ;
To see that pain his heart was sore.
Yet she rose the same wey,
For soul may never for pain dey, (die)
And eft they set it on her crown,
And burned her all to ashen down ;
And ever more she lived again,
For pain might she never be slain.

Then asked he her, why that this was
That she suffred such pain. “ Alass ! alass ! ”
She said ; “ I suffer this mysaventure
“ For on my hevede¹⁷ over-fair tyfure.¹⁸

¹⁵ a time.¹⁶ again.¹⁷ head.¹⁸ head-dress.

" For when I shuld either go or ride
 " I dyghte¹⁹ my bevede right moche with pride.
 " For to be praysed over all ladies,
 " And of pride to bear the prize,
 " And among knightes yn hall
 " I would be held fairest of all."

Brunne's Manuel, Harl. MS. N° 1701.

CHAP.
I.

ENGLISH
POETS WHO
PRECEDED
GOWER.

In another tale, this ancient bard attempts two humble strokes of satire on the fair sex :

THERE was a man beyond the sea,
 A miner, woned²⁰ yn a city.
 Miners, they make yn hyllys²¹ holes,
 As in the west country men seek coals.
 This miner sought stones under the molde²²
 That men make of sylver and golde.
 He wroght on a day and holed in the hil.
 A perilous chaunce to him fell;
 For a great party of that yche²³ mine
 Fel down in the hole and closed him in.
 His fellows all that were him hende,²⁴
 That were dead, well sothely wende.²⁵
 They yede²⁶ and took them all to rede,²⁷
 And told his wife that he was dead.
 This woman pleyned her husband sore.
Would God that many such women were.
 She helped his soule in all thing,
 In almes dede, and in offering.
 She offered for him to the alter,
 Full of wine a pitcher;
 And a fair loaf withall
 Every day as for a pryncypalle.
Few such women now we find
That to their husbandes are so kynde.
 But this wife at all her might
 Did for him both day and night.
 Fell it at the twelve month end,
 His fellows to the mountain gan wende,²⁸

¹⁹ made or dressed.
²⁰ same mine.
²⁷ advise.

²⁰ dwelt.

²¹ behind.

²⁸ begun to go.

²¹ hills.

²⁵ thought.

²² earth.

²⁶ went.

BOOK
VIII.HISTORY OF
ENGLISH
POETRY.

And came to the same stede²⁹ este,
Where they last their work left.
Right there they first began,
And pierced thro unto this man.
The man in gode state they found,
Living without wem³⁰ or wonde—
All the men were in great were³¹
How he had lived all that year.
But he told them every one
How he had lived there alone.

“ I have lived gracious life,
“ Thro the curtesie of my wife;
“ For every day she hath me sent
“ Bread and wine to present.”—Brunne’s Manuel, MS.

In a short tale, to deter women from cursing, he tries a dramatic quickness of dialogue:—

A woman on a day full rathe³²
Yede³³ to the watyr her for to bathe;
And to her doughter her clothys to kepe,
And bad her, she should not sleep.
“ But as soon as I thee call,
“ Be ready with my clothys all.”
Whan she was bathed, she called her faste,
And bade her bringe her clothys in haste.
Her doughter was not all ready:
Ne come nat at her first cry.
The mother that sat in her bath,
Wax full of ire and of wrath,
And clepyd³⁴ eftsonys aftyr her,
Kursyng with ryght grete yre,
And seyde “ The Devyl come on the,
“ For thou art nat redy to me.”
“ And y am ready,” seyde the Devyl,
“ To take that thou me betaght³⁵ with evyl.”
He flegh on here³⁶ where she stode,
And made her wytte al wode.³⁷—Brunne’s Manuel, MS.

²⁹ place again.³⁰ hurt.³¹ embarrassment.³² eagerly.³³ went.³⁴ called.³⁵ given up to me.³⁶ flew on her.³⁷ mad.

His tale of a Dragon is a longer effort of his narrative powers, with a little more imagination:—

CHAP.
I.

ENGLISH
POETS WHO
PRECEDED
GOWFER.

THERE ys an Ile beyond the sea,
There men were wont wonying³⁸ to be.
This yche³⁹ ile wax⁴⁰ all waste
And the folk drogh⁴¹ then yn haste.
So withyne a lytyl whyle,
Men held hyt a forsakyn yle.
Seththe wonede⁴² there a Dragon,
That did many man confusyun.
Men and women faste he slogh,⁴³
And did over all shame ynogh.
All that he found withoute house,
Thys dragun slogh so marveyulouse;
So moche folke gan he quelle,⁴⁴
Men seyde, he was a fende of helle.
All the folk of that country
Counseyled them what that myght be.
They armyd them all at their myght,
Against the dragun for to fyght.
But none of them myght undyrstande
Where the dragun was wonande.⁴⁵
Befel it that yche⁴⁶ tyde,
An ermyte wonede⁴⁷ there besyde,
A good man and ryght certeyn
Dwelled beside that wasteyn.⁴⁸
One of them gave counsel tyte⁴⁹
That they shulde go to that ermyte,
And aske cunseyl of swyche a dede,
In hope all the bettyr to spede.

They go to the Hermit: he bids them to shrive themselves, and do penance for three days: they obey: he prays, and an angel descends:—

The Angel said to the ermyte,
“ Do sumne⁵⁰ the folk astyte⁵¹

³⁸ accustomed to dwell.

⁴¹ withdrew.

⁴⁴ began to kill.

⁴⁷ Hermit dwelt.

⁵⁰ summon.

³⁹ same.

⁴² seeing that dwelt.

⁴⁵ was dwelling.

⁴⁸ desert.

⁵¹ immediately.

⁴⁰ became.

⁴³ slew.

⁴⁶ same.

⁴⁹ settled, or firm.

BOOK
VIII.HISTORY OF
ENGLISH
POETRY.

" That they come all hedyr
 " Before thee, each one togedyr.
 " Y shal be your alther⁵³ leader,
 " That the dragon you nat dere.⁵⁴

The folk echone⁵⁵ thedyr com;
 The Angel before them gan gon,
 And led them to that wasteyn
 That sum tyme was a stede⁵⁶ certeyn,
 Unto a place they yede⁵⁷ echone,
 And ther they found a tombe of stone.
 The Angel bad them lyft up the lydde,
 And as he bad, ryght so they dydde.

" Here," he seyde, " ys hys wonnyng"⁵⁸
 " With another wykked thyng.
 " Drede you noght, though he be found,
 " For all hys power have y bound."

Whan they had the tombe otwynne,⁵⁹
 The folk stood and looked withynne.
 They saw a woman there vyly lye,
 And her body clave in twey partye.⁶⁰
 Betwene tho twey partyes, the dragun lay
 Grisly to see with grete affray.—Brunne's Manuel, MS.

This lady, thus cut in pieces, had been an unfaithful wife.—We must not suppose, from these tales, that Brunne was an enemy to the fair sex: he praises virtuous ladies warmly: Thus—

- - - - Nothyng is to man so dear,
 As womanys love yn good manere.
 A good woman ys mannys blyss,
 Where her love ryght and stedfast ys.
 There ys no solace undyr hevене,
 Of all that a man may nevene,⁶¹
 That shuld a man so moche glew⁶²
 As a good woman that loveth true.
 Ne dearer is none yn Goddy's hurde⁶³
 Than a chaste woman with lovely worde.

Brunne's Manuel, MS.

⁵³ chief leader.

⁵⁴ hurt.

⁵⁵ each one.

⁵⁶ an inhabited place.

⁵⁷ went.

⁵⁸ dwelling.

⁵⁹ opened.

⁶⁰ two parts.

⁶¹ nam

⁶² delight.

⁶³ family.

Brunne gives a remarkable instance of his religious liberality, in a tale condemning a priest for wishing a Saracen's damnation, who had been converted, but had renounced his Christianity. He first gives his principle, and then his story. His principle is—

CHAP.

I.

ENGLISH
POETS WHO
PRECEDED
CHOWER.

God saith thys wurde to shew us the way :
Y wyl that none synful deye.
To leave hys synne he shal have space ;
And turne agen to lyfe and grace.
Whatsoever he have done,
Y wyl not his dampnacione.

He illustrates this by a tale of a priest named Carpus, and of a Saracen :—

Thys Prest thurgh prechyng and sawe⁶³
Brought a Sarasyn to Crystyn lawe.
Another Sarasyn of Paynye,
Hadde therwyth grete envye :
And turnede thys man to hym ageyn,
And our Crystendom was alle vain.
Thys prest tharefor was sorry,
And hated thys man felunly.
And preyde God, he wulde hym sende
Dampnacyon withouten ende.

To correct this furious and uncharitable priest, Brunne states that a vision was sent :—

Thys Prest lay yn hys bed a nyght,
And, gostly, he sawe a syght.
He sagh⁶⁴ a swythe merveylous brygge⁶⁵
Over the deep pytte gan lygge.⁶⁶
The plank that on the brygge was,
Was as sleder⁶⁷ as any glas.
But yn the pyt that was therundyr,
He saw so moche sorowe and wundyr

⁶³ discourse.⁶⁴ saw.⁶⁵ bridge.⁶⁶ begin to be laid.⁶⁷ slippery.

BOOK
VIII.HISTORY OF
ENGLISH
POETRY.

Of fiendes fele⁶⁸ that there wore,
 Thogh y tolde moche yyt wer there more.
 But shortly to telle fro.
 The man he sawe on the brygge go,
 Yn ful grete peryl and care,
 And ever yn poynt to mysfare.⁶⁹
 Yn poynt he was to falle adown
 Of hys head foremost the crown.
 The fiendes that were yn the pytte
 Smote upwarde gyf they myght hym hytte.
 And adders bite him by the feet.

He says that the priest was delighted to see the
 Saracen in this peril, and prayed that he might fall
 down into the pit among the fiends,

And ther withoutyn ende be,
 For he turned away fro thee.

But the priest's eye was, at this wish, attracted
 upwards:

Hym thought the rofe⁷⁰ was clove yn two,
 And the sky opened also.

There he saw our Saviour on the cross, with "hys
 wundys alle bloody," who thus rebuked the unforgiv-
 ing Christian:

"Carpus!" he seyd, "See wyth thyn eyne,
 "What y suffred for mannys pyne.
 "Man to save, I let me slo."⁷¹
 "Why wust⁷² thou dampne hym to wo?
 "Why hast thou hym so moche wyth ill,
 "When for mankinde I let me spylle?
 "With pain and hard passyon,
 "My body I gave for his ransun.
 "Why wust thou he hadde helle fire,
 "Since I have boght hym so dear?

⁶⁸ many.⁷¹ myself be slain.⁶⁹ mis-step.⁷⁰ roof.⁷² wishest.

" Yet were I redy man to buy,
 " Ere man wythouten ende shalde die.
 " Therfore wyth gode devocyon,
 " PRAY FOR MANNYS SALVACYON."

Brunne's Manuel, MS.

CHAP.
I

—
 ENGLISH
 POETS WHO
 PRECEDED
 GOWER.—
 {

This is an extraordinary effort of reason and benevolence for the reign of Edward the First.

But Brunne is never more successful than when he is pleading the cause of humanity. His tale of the Justice, who oppressed the poor, is told in his best manner:—

For hard dome⁷³ and covetyse,
 Y shal you telle of such a Justyce—
 Of hym the worde full wyde sprong,
 He gaf hard dome and otherwhyle wrong.
 Good men ofte hym besoght,
 For the poor that he woe wrought,
 That he shoulde have on them mercy,
 And pylle⁷⁴ them nat but mesurly:
 That they myght lyve yn peace by hym,
 And he nat so agens them grym.
 Was hys answee and hys sawe,
 " Y shall do them nothyng but lawe."

This severe magistrate, who would do nothing but law in all its rigour, at length fell sick, and all hoped that he would die:—

Hys syknes was harde and strong,
 That he myght nat lyve long;
 Men that sate aboute hys bedde
 Were agast and sore adredde:
 And hopyd well and understode,
 That their dread was for no good.
 All they behelde hym faste,
 And sawe hys colour ofte overcaste;
 And wroth⁷⁵ about to and fro;
 His bedde them thoght wulde cleve in two.

⁷³ judgment.

⁷⁴ pillage them.

⁷⁵ writhed.

BOOK
VIII.HISTORY OF
ENGLISH
POETRY.

And he cryde with a loud cry,
 " Lorde ! have on me mercy."
 Than spake a voyce yn the sky,
 That alle hyt herde that stode hym by.
 " Thou haddest never of man pytee ;
 " Ne y shall never have none of thee."

Brunne's Manuel, MS.

The same desire of protecting the weaker part of society from the power and violence of the strong; seems to have actuated him in the tale of a Knight, who was in a state of punishment after death, for having robbed others. The importance of the impression which he wished to create by this narration, we may estimate by recollecting, that his sovereign, Edward I. had, when prince, encouraged his knights in these practices. He begins with stating, that there were two knights who were greatly attached to each other, and that one of them died :

A sykeness on the toun gan falle.
 He deyde soon as we shul alle.
 The t'outher kynght seyde ofte " Alass !"
 For hys felawe so soon dead was.
 Fell hyt so, thys lyvyng knyght,
 Yn hys bed he lay a nyght ;
 And was yn such a wakyng,
 That he myght sleep for no thyng.
 The moon shone yn chaumbre flore.
 The knyght lay and lookyd before.
 At a windowe came yn a beme,⁷⁸
 And yn the shynyng he saw a gleame,
 Ryght like that knyght every dey, l,
 That sum tyme he loved ful weyl.
 Thys knyght thoght—' Hyt ys fantome,
 ' That I see thus yn the moon come.'
 He was affrayd withoute fayle,
 And that was no grete merveyle.

⁷⁸ beam of light.

But the knight that was slain.
Comforted him some and some he scorned.

"Be not asked for me, my
"That thou lovestest so dearly,
"I was thy fellow, thy true friend,
"For help y' came to that day then—
"Help me now: y' see ye see
"That y' may come for better fortune."

The knight that lay on the ground
Was bolder and more stout.
And said: "Fellow, for shame,
"What ye say ye—show ye me.
Then spake he in the most angry
"Though y' had more a son and a wife,
"All the possession ye could wish,
"That y' make ye a wife,
"A penny y' make more for the world,
"For a child that y' have now,
"Of a poor man without more,
"Alas! that ever y' saw the world,
"That child ye have in the world,
"As heavy as my heart is now,
"Hill ye make more of the world,
"Under heaven as heavy as the world,
"No as the world is ye in the world,
"As the world is the world,
"That the world is the world,
"That the world is the world,
"And ye see the world is the world."

Excerpt from the text.

His vision of the world was a vision of
fancy, and the contrast is possible in some effect.

I saw a bridge of men and women,
All green and white and blue and red,
Black and white and red and blue,
Downward in the world of men,
When I saw the world of men and women.

BOOK
VIII.HISTORY OF
ENGLISH
POETRY.

Beyond that bridge was a country,
 The feyreste that ever God let be.
 As a meadow hyt was green,
 So fair of sight ys none y wene,
 So full of flourys logh and high,
 And saveryd swete as spycerye :
 Y saw there housys of full rich attire,
 All of glittering golde as fire.
 Blisful bryghtnes was thereynne ;
 The syght was cely and welthe to wynde.
 Some were caste with rich colours,
 And fair painted with fruit and floures.
 The bridge that over the watyr lay,
 Hyt was ever of swyche asay,
 That therover myght no man passe,
 But he were clean of every trespass.

Brunne's Man. MS.

To give more of an author so antiquated, would only weary the reader. But as he is the first of our vernacular poets who wrote in a style that is at all readable now, and as the work from which the above quotations are taken, exhibits the infant state of our most valuable branch of poetry, and has never before been submitted to the notice of the public, I have thought that the above specimens would not be uninteresting. Perhaps another tale will not be wholly unacceptable; as it is the most ancient instance that I have seen of an attempt in our language at a humorous tale. I must not be understood as putting the inartificial humour of our venerable Brunne in competition with the polished carelessness and easy elegance of Prior; but it may amuse to see this pleasing class of composition in its most rude and homely state. It is a tale which Brunne tells of one Peter, or Pers, a miser and a usurer, and of whom

a traveller laid a wager, that, hard hearted as he was, something might be got from him by begging :—

CHAP.
I.

ENGLISH
POETS WHO
PRECEDED
CHOWER.

- - - - - Pers was okerere,⁷⁸

And was swythe⁷⁹ covetous,

And a nygun⁸⁰ and avarous.

And gathered pens⁸¹ unto store,

As okerers doun every hore.⁸²

Befel hyt so upon a day

That poor-men sat yn the way,

And spred their hatren on their barme,⁸³

Agens the sun that was warme ;

And rekened the custome houses echoun,⁸⁴

At whych they had good,⁸⁵ and at whych noun.

As they spak of many what,

Come Pers forth yn thar gat.⁸⁶

Then ech one that sat and stode,

" Her comth Pers that never dyd good,"

Echon seyde to other jangland,⁸⁷

" They toke never good at Pers hand ;

" Ne none poor man never shal have,

" Coude he never so well crave."

One of them began to say,

" A wager dar⁸⁸ y with you lay,

" That y shal have some good at hym,

" Be he never so gryl,⁸⁹ ne grym."

To that wager they graunted all,

To gyve him a gyft, gyf so myght befall.

Thys man upsterte, and took the gate⁹⁰

Tyl he came at Pers gate.

As he stode still and bode the quede,⁹¹

One came wyth an asse, charged wyth brede.⁹²

That yche⁹³ brede Pers had boght,

And to hys house should hyt be broght.

He saw Pers come ther wythalle,

The poor thocht, " now aske y shal."

⁷⁸ usurer.

⁸¹ pence.

⁸⁴ each one.

⁸⁶ way.

⁸⁹ angry.

⁹² bread.

⁷⁹ very.

⁸³ hour.

⁸⁵ goods.

⁸⁷ chattering.

⁹⁰ way.

⁹³ same.

⁸⁰ niggard.

⁸³ spread their vestments
on their bosom.

⁸⁸ dare.

⁹¹ uttered his request.

BOOK
VIII.HISTORY OF
ENGLISH
POETRY.

"Y aske the, Sun," gode pur charite;
"Pers ! gyf thy wyl be."

Pers stode, and loked on hym
Felunliche wyth ygen⁹⁵ grym.
He stooped down to seek a stone,
But as hap was, than found he none.
For the stone he took a loaf,
And at the poor man hym drofe.
The poor man hent⁹⁶ yt up—belyve—
And was therof full ferly⁹⁷ blythe.
To hys felawes faste he ran—
"Lo !" he seyde—"what y have ;
"Of Pers a gyft; so God me save."

Brunne's Man. MS.

He shewed the loaf, which his begging had provoked Pers to throw at him instead of a stone ; and his companions admitted that he had won his wager.

To the credit of the English clergy of the fourteenth century, it may be remarked, that they contributed much to the growth and popularity of English poetry at that time. By becoming versifiers, they sanctioned the Muse in the opinion of their contemporaries. And among these early labourers in our Parnassus, Richard Rolle, the hermit of Hampole, ought not to be forgotten. His poem, called the "The Prikke of Conscience,"⁹⁸ was expressly written for those who could understand only English,⁹⁹ and contains from nine to

⁹⁴ Son. ⁹⁵ eyes. ⁹⁶ seized. ⁹⁷ suddenly.

⁹⁸ I quote from the MS. of it in the Biblioth. Regis. 18. A 5.—He is thus named in a passage quoted by Warton :—He died 1349 :

In perfit living which passeth poysie,
Richard, Hermite, contemplative of sentence,
Drough in English 'The Prick of Conscience.'

Lydg. Boc.

⁹⁹ Towards the end he says—

Now I have, firste as I undertoke,
Fulfilled the sevene matieres of this boke,
And out of Latyn I have hem idrawe ;
The whiche to som man is unknowe.

And

ten thousand lines rimed. His description of the fourteen pains of the infernal world is not without some rude imagination. He makes the first pain, Fire :—

CHAP.
I.

ENGLISH
POETS WHO
PRECEDED
GOWER.

That fire is so hot and ever brenneth,
That fire all the water that stondeth or renneth,
That is in the sea, other owher elles
Thorough all the world, as clerkes telles,
Yette hit myght nought thereof quench a fote,
Tho hit runne into that fire that is so hote,
No more than o drop of water a quenche myghte,
All the world yif hit brenned lighte.

He makes the second pain, Cold :—

Ac that colde is so stronge and keen
That tho the most stow that is owher iseen ;
Other the most mounteyne that is in ony londe
Were iturned into a firy bronde,
And amynd that cold wer yset don,
Yet hit shold freeze and turn into ice anon.

The fifth pain is Thirst :—

For so grete thirst there shal be,
That their heartes to clevech, as I telle thee—
Gall of dragouns their wine shall be,
And venom of adders therewith, seith he.

The sixth, Darkness :—

The which is as grete at midday
As at midnyght and that lasteth ay.
For in helle nys never day ac ever nyght,
When brenneth fire ac hit yeveth no lyght.
Ac yutte the synful man shal openly see,
All the sorow and the pain that therein shall be,
And every torment and every peyne
Thorough sparkles of that fire in certeyne.

And namely, to lewed men of Yngelonde,
That konneth nothings but Englisshe understonde.
And therfor this tretys outedrawe I wolde
In Englisshe; that men undirstonde hit sholde.
And *Prikke of Conscience* in this tretys yhote.
The whiche o mannes soule is best bote.

Hampole, MS. Bib. Reg. 18. A 5.

BOOK
VIII.HISTORY OF
ENGLISH
POETRY.

The eighth, Pain :—

Is the horrible vermyn and venemous,
 And wild bestes that beth horrible and grym—
 With woodnesse drawynge into hell wel sone,
 And adders fast knawynge by the bone—
 And that vermyn shal ever on him creep,
 And on them fastneth their clawes wel deep,
 And them bylappe on eche side about,
 And eche limb gnawe within and without:
 And vermyn shall be alle their clothinge,
 And vermyn shall be alle their beddynge.

The eleventh is Weeping :—

And their tears shulleth ever laste
 And their tears shulleth so grete heat have—
 That the water that from their eyes doth renne
 Thanne shall them scaldy and brenne—
 For hit shall be hotter thanne ever was
 Ony lead imulte, other ony brass.

On the fourteenth, Despair, he says—

- - - Hy shulleth desire for to dye,
 Ac deth shal nought come in their weye.
 And eche of them shal have othir in hate,
 And ever amonge them shal be gret debate:
 And full of wrathe hy shulleth be thanne
 And eche of them shal other warye and banne.

After these dismal pictures, it may amuse the
 reader to know how this versifying Hermit sketches
 his Heaven :—

- - - There is lyf without ony deth,
 And ther is youthe without ony elde ;
 And ther is all maner welthe to welde ;
 And ther is reste without ony travaille—
 And ther is peace without ony strife ;
 And ther is all maner likynge of lyf—
 And ther is bright somer ever to se ;
 And ther is nevere wynter in that cuntree ;
 And ther is more worshipec and honour,
 Thanne ever hadde kynge other emperour.

And ther is grete melodee of Aungeles songe,
 And ther is preysing hem amonge.
 And ther is alle maner friendshiphe that may be,
 And ther is evere perfect love and charitie;
 And ther is wisdom without folye;
 And ther is honeste without vilenye :
 All these a man may joyes of hevene call.
 Ac yutte the most soverya joye of alle,
 Is the sight of Goddes bright face,
 In wham resteth alle manere grace.

Hampole, MS. Bib. Reg. 18. A 5.

CHAP.

I.

ENGLISH
 POETS WHO
 PRECEDED
 GOWER.

There is another moral and religious poem, tremendous in its length, for when complete it must have contained from forty to fifty thousand lines, written after the above, and with more perfect rhythm; of which a parchment manuscript much burnt, but very neatly written, still exists in the British Museum.¹⁰⁰ Of this, one extract, of an apparition, may be cited as a specimen both of its style and metrical fluency. It begins with friars going to sing the funeral masses for a corpse they buried:—

- - - Thai war twenty freres
 Alsamyn¹⁰¹ withouten seculeres,
 And alsamyn so thai went
 To Gyes house with gude entent.
 And in that house said thai and he
 'Placebo' with the 'Dirige.'
 For his saul that was husband thare,
 And for all saules that suffered care.
 When all was said in gude degre,
 Till 'requiescant in pace,'
 Thai herd a Voice cum them beside,
 Als it did at that other tide.
 Like a besom by them it went
 That was swypeand¹⁰² on a pavement.

¹⁰⁰ It is in the Cotton Library, Tiberius, E 7.

¹⁰¹ altogether.

¹⁰² was sweeping.

BOOK
VIII.HISTORY OF
ENGLISH
POETRY.

Sum of the folk tharfore were flaid;¹⁰³
And soon the Prior unto it said:

“ I conjore ye, with main and mode,
In the vertu of Christes blode;
In this stede that you stand still,
And answer what we ask ye will.”

Than the Voice, with wordes meke,
Als a man that had been seke,
Until the Prior thus gan say:

“ Why deres¹⁰⁴ you me thus ilk day?
It es naght lang sen¹⁰⁵ I tald ye,
All that you wald ask of me.
What sold¹⁰⁶ I now say to you here?”

And than answered another frere
And anowre¹⁰⁷ of grete clergi.
He said, “ Tell here till us in hi
Whether that thou of pain be quit,
Or els what pain you sufferes yitt.”

The Voice answered sore onane,
And said, “ I love God al his lane.¹⁰⁸
For swilk grace unto me is graid¹⁰⁹
Thurgh messes that war for me said,
That fro this time now efterward
Am I past fra all paynes hard.”

MS. Cott. Lib. Tib. E 7.

Another English Poem, called the Pilgrim, exists in manuscript, which is a dialogue between a pilgrim and several virtues and vices.¹¹⁰ It is a didactic poem, attempting moral satire, and therefore is entitled to notice in the history of our poetry.¹¹¹ As a moral and religious satire, the alliterative work of Piers Plouhman, remarkable for its freedoms with the religious of his day, and for being written without rime,

¹⁰³ fled.¹⁰⁴ hurt.¹⁰⁵ since.¹⁰⁶ should.¹⁰⁷ another.¹⁰⁸ for his favors.¹⁰⁹ ordered.¹¹⁰ It is in the Cott. Lib. MS. Tiberius, A 7: It contains above 4,000 lines.¹¹¹ The following verses are attached in it to a colored drawing, which exhibits a man shewing his chest of gold to the pilgrim, who looks fearfully at it, and praying; while a little devil is seated on the-man's head:

claims also both perusal and commendation.¹¹³ Several effusions of genius appear in the songs and ballads of our ancestors, which the taste of our poetical antiquaries within the last fifty years has rescued from oblivion. The historical poem of Barbour we have already quoted, and ought not to be neglected. The poems of Adam Davie may be here recollected.

CHAP.

I.

ENGLISH
POETS WHO
PRECEDED
GOWER.

a stone coffin is near, of which death is taking off the lid, and shewing a corpse within.

Now wole I speke of my mawmet,
And off myn ydol that is so oold,
Made of silver and off gold;
In the whiche and the ensure,
Is the ymage and the figure,
And the prynte, as thou mayst see,
Off the Lorde of the contre.
This is the God whiche hy depos
Loveth to be schutte in hucches
clos—

This God kan make folkys blynde
That to his observaunce hem bynde,
And causith hem ageyne resoun
To caste her lokes lowe down—
In eerthe is hooly ther labour;
In eerthe is also ther tresour.
Eerthe is ther joye, and ther plea-
saunce, [avaunce.
Nothyng but eerthe may hem
MS. Tiber. A 7.

¹¹³ Mr. Whittaker has made his edition of the Visions of this author valuable by his commentary and notes.—His Crede has been also republished.—As Mr. Warton has written fully on this author, I would refer the reader to his work.

C H A P. II.

ON THE ENGLISH ROMANCES.

BOOK
VIII.

IN this stage of the history of our Poetry, our ancient vernacular Romances deserve our attention, from their intrinsic merit and important effects. They belong to a class of compositions, with which the gravest of us have been delighted in the morning of our lives, and which most of us still value in their best form, altho the severer taste of our maturity exacts superior requisites. All romances and tales being the offspring of the imagination, they derive their birth from one of the great sources of poetry; and they usually display, especially those of distinguished merit, the charms and excellencies of every part of the Parnassian region. Tho often wearisome, yet in some passages they recreate our fancy; by others they agitate the sensibility; in others they gratify the cultivated taste. Fictitious, or allowed to be so, in every part; in their characters, incidents, and dialogue; they are confined by no limits but those of probability, while they relate to human beings; and of possibility beyond them: except indeed those rules of moral decorum, which no sane writer will violate. These friendly boundaries are so undefined and so moveable, and admit so vast an extent of range, that genius in its fictions has all the kingdoms of nature at its command, and may appropriate and use whatever they contain. It may, like Shakespear, exhaust known worlds, and then imagine new. The mind will never cease to hail its flights, to welcome its

combinations, and to urge it to fresh exertions. We love to wander in the ideal world; we are thankful to the writer who provides the banquet for our fancy; and hence the romance writer has in every age commanded eager readers. Not that the same fictions always please. It is the class of composition, not the individual work, which never ceases to interest. Every particular romance is necessarily a perishable production, because in every age the actors and their manners have to be varied, to suit the new feelings, and to rise up to the new ideas which mankind are always obtaining, and which time, ever moving onwards, will not suffer to be stationary. Theagenes and Chariclea; all the heroes of Arthur and Charlemagne; Kyng Alesandre, and Richard Cœur de Lion; Amadis de Gaul, and the Destruction of Troy; Troilus and Cressid; the Chronicle of the Cid; Cassandra, Clelia, and the Arcadia; have all had their day; each has delighted thousands in its turn, and all are passing quietly to that oblivious tomb, where none but a tasteful antiquary, with his occasional curiosity, can be expected to disturb them.

It was in the twelfth, thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries, that romances were so highly popular that they constituted almost the only reading of the great, the fair, and the unlearned world. Even the clergy themselves yielded to the fashion. They were not only among the earliest composers and translators of the romances for the laity; but they indulged themselves in an emulous composition of legends, to the full as fictitious; often as fanciful; and if not always as interesting, yet more venerated than the popular tales. Indeed, from the eleventh century, till scholastic logic, military tactics, natural

BOOK
VIII.HISTORY OF
ENGLISH
POETRY.

philosophy, mathematics, astrology, ethical reasonings, religious warfare, and the increasing business and political schemes of life, absorbed the largest portion of the mind of the day, the exercise of the imagination was the great character of the intellect of Europe; it was mingled with every thing; it actuated every one. It was the pervading feature of the established theology; it filled heaven with saints; purgatory with sinners; and earth with relics, transubstantiation, heresies, miracles, and monks. It made all religion, all life, a romance. It wafted all the kings and statesmen of Europe, for nearly two centuries, to Palestine. It crept into history; it characterized geography; it governed medicine; it influenced astronomy; it identified itself with chemistry. It haunted even the schoolmen. It seems only to have been excluded from the stern tribunals of law, into which fancy never comes, or comes by stealth; where she is always unwelcome and necessarily discouraged, and from which she is soon contented or compelled to depart.

The English romances that are now extant have, with few exceptions, been translated from the French. The most ancient is *sir Tristrem*, assumed with great probability to have been written by Thomas the Rimer, in the thirteenth century.¹ The next in antiquity, and for some time deemed the oldest, is '*The Geste of Kyng Horn*.'² The romance of

¹ Sir Walter Scott has published this romance from the Auchinleck MSS. with an introduction, appendixes, arguments and notes; and the description and abstract of two French romances, on the same subject, by Mr. George Ellis: all valuable and curious.

² Mr. Ritson published this in his *Ancient English Metrical Romances*, vol. 2. pp. 91-155, with the ancient '*Hor Childe and maiden Rimnild*,' in his notes, vol. 3. pp. 282-320. He assigns it to the end of the reign of Edw. I. or to that of Edw. II.

Richard Cœur de Lion should be placed earlier than Kyng Horn, if the English work be that alluded to by Robert of Gloucester and Brunne; but its style is certainly later than the first, and probably than the last of these authors.³ The pleasing tale of Ywaine and Gawin, has been referred to the time of Richard II.⁴ "Kyng Alesandre," a spirited romance;⁵ the Kyng of Tars; Le Beaus Desconus; and Emare;⁶ may belong to the fourteenth century. Others have been printed, of dates subsequent to the former, or less certain, by Mr. Ritson⁷ and Mr. Weber.⁸ Several others have been described by Mr. Ellis.⁹

CHAP.
II.
ENGLISH
ROMANCES.

These romances vary in merit. In Sir Tristrem, the "turn of phrase is close, nervous and concise, even to obscurity; there is an elliptical mode of narration adopted, which rather hints at than details the story."¹⁰ Kyng Horn has a pleasing strain of natural feeling, and is simply told in an artless and rude, but not vulgar style. Richard is flowing and diffuse, and

³ Mr. Weber has edited this in his *Metrical Romances*, vol. 2. pp. 3-278. It is certainly an interesting specimen of the popular tales of this celebrated king. It contains 7,136 lines, rimed in couplets.

⁴ It is in Ritson's Collection, vol. 1. pp. 1-169.

⁵ It is the first in Mr. Weber's publication, vol. 1. pp. 3-327, where it appears in 8033 riming lines.

⁶ These are in Ritson, vol. 2, and have considerable merit. Their length is various: King of Tars, 1,148 lines; Le Beau Desconus, 2,130; and Emare, 1,035.

⁷ Ritson has added in his Collection, Sir Launfal, 1,040 lines; Sir Orpheo, 510; Le Bone Florence of Rome, 2,189 lines; The Earl of Tolous, 1,218 lines; the Squyr of Lowe Degre, 1,132 lines; and the Knight of Curtesy, and the Fair Lady of Faguell, 500 lines.

⁸ Mr. Weber's publication contains, besides those already noticed, Sir Cleges, 540 lines; Lai le Fraine, 402; the Lyfe of Impoydon, 2,346; Amis and Amiloun, 2,495; the Process of the Sevyng Sages, 4,002; Octovian Imperator, 1,962; Sir Amadas, 778; the Hunttyng of the Hare, 270 lines.

⁹ In his 'Specimens of early English Metrical Romances,' chiefly written during the early part of the fourteenth century, in three volumes.

¹⁰ W. Scott's introduction, pp. lxxx & lxxxi.

BOOK
VIII.HISTORY OF
ENGLISH
POETRY.

sometimes animated and impressive. *Ywain* is superior to *Kyng Horn*. In many parts the narration glides with an easy yet impressive felicity, and fixes the attention with considerable power. *Kyng Alesandre* deserves the encomium of its editor.¹¹ Some of these romances exhibit a more continuous flow of metrical melody, than the other contemporary poetry. Most of them are translations from more ancient Norman French originals,¹² tho frequently with improvements.¹³ Of the "*Squyr of lowe Degre*" no French original has been traced, and it has been pronounced to be a genuine English performance.¹⁴ This circumstance makes it interesting to us; and tho diffuse at times, even to prolixity, it deserves considerable attention, approaching more to the features and language of the higher style of narrative poetry, than most of the preceding. It has the form and gait of something better, tho it is often the protracted shadow instead of the living reality; yet there is a cultivated manner about it, spirited attempts at description, fluency of elocution, pictures of manners, occasional expressions of feeling, and at times a strength of diction, which make us regret that the author had not

¹¹ 'Few English romances can boast of a greater share of good poetry. The lines are less burdened with expletives, and exhibit far better versification, than those of other poems of the time, and frequently possess an energy which we little expect.' Weber's *Introd.* p. xxxiii.

¹² 'No romance of English rhyme has been hitherto discovered or mentioned to exist before Edward I.; towards the end of which, *Horn-child*, a translation or imitation from the French appeared.' Ritson's *Diss.* vol. 1. p. 87.—Mr. Weber's opinion is, that 'all the English romances, with the exception of the *St. Graal*, *Percival*, and *Launfal*, are anonymous. They are, generally, perhaps in every case, translations from the French, and at least a century later.' Weber, *Introd.* p. xviii.

¹³ 'In general they have been shortened to at least one-half of their original length.' Weber, xvii. I consider this reduction, for the most part, an improvement.

¹⁴ Ritson's *Met. Rom.* vol. 3. p. 344; and *Dissert.* vol. 1. p. 95.

the taste to select and compress, as well as the power to expatiate and the desire to detail.¹⁵

CHAP.
II.

ENGLISH
ROMANCES.

It may be considered by some as a reproach to the memory of our forefathers, that they should have been so fond of fictions, which frowning philosophy now consigns to the nursery, and chides even beauty for regarding. But, independently of the just remark of our great moralist, that whatever withdraws us from the dominion of the present, advances us in the dignity of rational beings; a power pre-eminently the prerogative of romance, as well in the amusement which it affords us, as in the improvement to which it urges us; reflection also suggests, that the feeling which cherishes the works of imagination, is not only natural, but has been, as well as these discredited compositions, auxiliary to the civilization and promotive of the happiness of society, and may still be powerfully contributive to its future advancement. In every shape and form they seem to exhibit the mind escaping, to use our Sidney's metaphor, from our brazen into the golden age. Most dissimilar in merit as all human minds are, romances are still so many little Utopias, in which the writer tries to paint or to inculcate something which he considers to be more useful, more happy or more delightful, more excellent or more interesting, than the world he lives in, than the characters he surveys, or the events or evils which he experiences. Absurd will be the speculations of the absurd; depraved, even the elysium of the depraved. It requires a rare combination of genius, knowledge, and judgment, to discern the true features of the beau ideal, or to paint

¹⁵ See it in Ritson, vol. 3. pp. 145-192. As this romance has such pretensions, as yet unshaken, to be considered as an original English composition, I confess that I read it with peculiar interest.

BOOK
VIII.HISTORY OF
ENGLISH
POETRY.

with effect the charming visions of the fancy. It is not every mind that forms just notions of the attainable perfections of the human character. The every poet tries to paint the excellencies of his personages as vividly as he is able, yet his own conception must be the limit of their merits. The monk, the viking, the minstrel, the knight, the philosopher and the enthusiast, have each a peculiar beau idéal which, if they should write romances, they would not fail to display. The romance writers in every age have made this display; and it is from this habit which they could not avoid, that society has greatly benefited. From the romance of Horn to Sir Charles Grandison, we still have the representations of the beau idéal of their authors, more or less either exhibited in the favorite characters, or the deterring contrast of obnoxious ones. In the works of imagination, almost all writers, from the natural desire of exalting their heroes and heroines, use an Utopian pencil, and endeavor to give either the best of what exists in actual society, more usually something better, according as they conceive that better to be. Exalted minds take high flights, and paint a Sarpedon, a Hector, and a Themistocles. Inferior tastes produce inferior pictures, but still aim at what they deem excellence. The monastic legendary rose in his saintly biography; his brightest image of earthly perfection; and the same feeling Amadis de Gaul was intended to represent every knightly grace in its richest state of desert. Romances have thus been perpetually creating to improve the world, where their writers of mind and conceptions have been capable of benefiting it. Not that the authors have always

moral utility distinctly in their contemplation. They meant merely to depict the effusions of their fancy; but fancy, from its own natural tendency, independent of any deliberate volition, always builds its castles and paints its scenery as nobly and as interestingly as it is able. Nature interweaves the spirit of improvement so sagaciously with all our faculties, that they must be greatly perverted before their exercise can be useless. No man has ever painted wickedness, believing it to be such, for the purpose of recommending it to the practice of his readers. Demons only could be capable of such malignity. If authors with corrupted minds have written corrupting works, it has been because, from the influence of ruined taste or bad passions, they have for the time believed that the depravity was the preferable conduct. But their evil example is no exception to the remark, that the writer in his tale, romance, or poem, puts forth the best mind he has, displays the best feelings that he possesses, and draws the best characters that he can appreciate, or is accustomed to conceive. From the natural desire of reputation, every man performs the task which he allots to himself as ably as he can; and as the great preponderance of nature is always to good, society has been on the whole perpetually a gainer by the romances, tales, poetry and dramas of its authors, notwithstanding the alloy of some individual eccentricities. Fictitious compositions are so many concentrations of the scattered virtues of life; so many personifications of whatever is amiable and admirable in the manners or conceptions of the day. Chaucer, in his *Palamon and Troilus*, painted knightly merit as high as he could fancy it. Gower composed his series of tales avowedly

BOOK
VIII.HISTORY OF
ENGLISH
POETRY.

for the purpose of benefiting his readers : and the romancers, as well as Occleve and Lydgate, like Virgil formerly in his *Æneid*, and Xenophon in his *Cyropedia*, labored to the same end, as certainly, tho less avowedly, as Brunne in his "*Handlyng of Synne*," or our worthy Hermit in his "*Prikke of Conscience*," and his fellow rimer in the *Pilgrim*. We may indeed say, that most of the romances of our forefathers were advantageous in some respect or other to the progress of their social life. In every one some vice is made revolting, and some virtue interesting. And tho sir Anthony Wydville in the fifteenth century, like sir Philip Sidney in the next, might, from other instruction, be too accomplished to need such tutors, yet there were myriads below them in England, to whom the humblest tale was a lesson of morals and manners, in some point or other. The inferior intellect needs the inferior writer, as much as the excellent mind demands something that is even more excellent than itself. The lowest traveller in life has to be improved as well as the most accomplished ; and it is probable that our best romances and tales have been, on the whole, nearly as efficacious in their moral operations as our sermons and our ethics. They have at least been great auxiliaries. Society would not have been what it is, without them. If Alexander formed himself on Achilles, we may suspect that the Black Prince was not uninfluenced by Arthur and his knights.

It is amusing to remark, not only how the romances of one age are superseded by those which follow, but also, how their beau ideal of the human character improved in each. The meritorious qualities of a Horn Child, a Tristram, or a Lancelot, are excelled by those

of an Amadis de Gaul. Ariosto and Tasso soared far beyond the minstrels, Wace, Chretien de Troyes, and Vasco Lobeira. More intellect and refinement were combined with the hero and the lover in the **Oroondates** and **Grand Cyrus**. Succeeding romancers have paid equal homage to the improving spirit of society. Even a Voltaire attempted to draw his picture of human excellence in the **Henriade**, tho some original sin lowered him down to the **Pucelle**. It is the fault of the artist, not of his art, if his fictions be either unuseful or pernicious. Let us then not reprimand our ancestors for their attachment to these compositions, nor for producing them. Fictitious narratives have been highly useful, and may be more so. We all need tuition full as much as we dislike it. It may therefore be welcomed from every quarter, and particularly when it comes accompanied by harmless emotion and intellectual delight. Let us only urge our minstrels and fableurs to make their own ideal beauty as excellent as they can, before they embody it to our sight.

Of the attachment of our ancestors to romantic compositions, we have many evidences. When the noble Bruce, in his exile, wished to recreate his wearied companions, he read to them a romance. Several were transcribed for our sovereigns Henry III. Edward I. and others. When Chaucer is afflicted with sleeplessness, he takes a romance "to rede and drive the night away." Henry V. urged Lydgate to versify the Destruction of Troy, to animate the declining heroism of his nobility. And Occleve, in his zeal against Lollardy, advised sir John Oldcastle to leave off studying "Holy Writ," and to read "Lancelot de Lake," "Vegece," or the "Siege of Troie or

CH 4
II.
ENGLISH
ROMAN

LIBRARY OF ENGLAND,

...all the romances we have. begin
...that they were made at the re-
...amusement of the great; and they
...pal part of the noble libraries. Of
...we have a curious specimen in the
...ari of Warwick, which, in 1306, he
...of Bordesley in Worcestershire."

...Thomas Hoccleve,' printed by George Mason,

...for this catalogue to the Rev. Mr. Todd, who has
...his 'Illustrations of Gower and Chaucer,' from
...1888.

...baylé e en la garde le Abbé e le Covent de Bor-
...à touzjours touz les *Romaunces* desouz només;
...Volum, qe est appellé Tresor—Un Volum, en le quel
...de Lancelot; E un Volum del *Romaunce* de Aynges
...*Romaunce*—Un Volum des *Evangelies*, é de Vie des
...p'le des quatre principals Gestes de Charles e de
...e de Girard de Viene, E de Emery de Nerbonne—
...*Romaunce* Emond del Ageland, e deu Roy Charles dooun
...*Romaunce* de Gwyoun de Nauntoyl—E un Volum del
...et Vespasien—E un Volum del *Romaunce* Josep ab
...Saint Grael—E un Volum, qe p'le coment Adam fust
...Paradys, e le *Genesis*—E un Volum, en le quel sount con-
...*Romaunces*, ceo est assaveir, *Vitas patrum* au com-
...un Counte de Anteypt; e la Visio Saint Pol; E pus
...Seus; E le *Romaunce* de Williame de Loungespe; E
...humes; E le Mirour de Alme—Un Volum, en le quel
...Vie Saint Pere é Saint Pol, e des autres liv.—E un
...Apocalips; e un livre de Phisik é de Surgie—Un
...de Gwy é de la Reygne tut enterement—Un Vo-
...de Troies—Un Volum del *Romaunce* de Willame
...de Arabie—Un Volum de *Romaunce* de Amase
...del *Romaunce* Girard de Viene—Un Volum del
...del Roy Costentine—Un Volum de le enseigment
...Roy Alisaundre—Un Volum de la Mort ly Roy
...—Un Volum en le quel sount contenz les Enfaunces
...il fust mené en Egipt; E la vie Saint Edw^d;
...La Vengeaunce n're Seygneur par Vespasian e
...Saint Nicolas qe fust nez en Patras; E la Vie Saint
...Saint Cudlac; E la Passioun n're Seygneur; E la
...Saint Bernard de n're Dame Saint Marie; e del Passioun
...n're Seign^r; E la Vie Saint Eufraisie; E la Vie
...Sainte Vie Saint Juliane—Un Volum del *Romaunce*
...—Un petit rouge livre en le quel sount con-
...—Un Volum del *Romaunce* des Mareschaus
...—Les queus livres nous grauntons pur nos
...il demorront en la dit Abbeye, &c. Escrites
...Edward 3^d. Todd's Illust. pp. 161, 162. This

Indeed, such a present to a monastic congregation implies, that they were not unacceptable, nor the taste for them discreditable, even to the clergy. The permission given to the fellows and scholars of the colleges at Oxford, to read in the winter season round their hall-fires, after dinner or supper, ballads and other decorous recreations, poems, chronicles, and the wonders of this world,¹⁸ may be fairly construed to include the tales and romances, with which all, from the king to the beggar, were reputably delighted.

CHA.
II.ENGLISH
ROMANCE

In almost all our romances, we may observe the endeavor of the writer to paint his favorites with every perfection which his own conceptions enabled him to give them. Thus, in our oldest English tale, "the Geste of Kyng Horn," we have him first portrayed in the highest personal beauty—

Fairer child ne myhte be born,
For rain ne might by rine,
Ne sun might shine
Fairer child than he was.
Bright so ever any glass,
So white so any lyly flower;
So rose red was his colour.
He was fair and eké bold,
And of fifteen winter old
Nis non his yliche
In none kinges riche.¹⁹

The writer next gives him one of the greatest merits of the day, by exhibiting him with undaunted

is indeed a very curious specimen of a nobleman's library of the fourteenth century; for observing and publishing which, Mr. Todd deserves the thanks of the students of our antiquities.

¹⁸ 'Gracia recreationis in aula, in cantilenis et aliis solaciis honestis, moram facere condecentem; et poemata, regnorum chronicas et mundi hujus mirabilia,' &c. See the Statutes quoted by Mr. Warton, in his History of Poetry, vol. 1. pp. 92, 93.

¹⁹ Ritson's Metrical Romances, vol. 2. p. 91.

BOOK VIII. valor; for tho, as riding out with only two companions—

HISTORY OF
ENGLISH
POETRY.

He found by the stronde
Aryved on his londe
Shipes fyfteen
Of Sarazynes keen,²⁰

He attacks immediately, with his two friends, the crews of these fifteen ships—

Sword hy gonne gripe
And togedere smyte;
Hy smyten under shield
That hy somme yfelde.²¹

They are taken prisoners, and put into a ship, to drive by themselves at the mercy of the waves. On the second day, Horn displays the animation of his mind on descrying land:

Y tell you tiding;
Ich hear foules sing,
And see the grases spring,
Blythe be ye alyve;
Our ship is come to ryve."²²

They land on the unknown shores, and Horn leaves the ship to the sea, with this address, by which the author takes occasion to make his hero shew his filial recollections:—

" Now, ship! by the flood
Have dayes good.
By the sea brink
No water thee adrink.
Soft mote thou sterye,
That water thee ne derye.
Yef thou comest to Sudenne,
Greet them that me kenne.
Greet wel the good
Queene Godild, mi moder."²³

The king of the country receives them kindly; and with his aid the author proceeds to imbue his hero

²⁰ Ritson's *Metrical Rom.* v. 2. p. 93.

²² *Ib.* p. 96.

²¹ *Ib.* p. 92.

²³ *Ib.* p. 97.

with the further accomplishments which were then thought most valuable, the art of hunting, music and poetry, carving and waiting at table. The king orders his steward to teach him these qualifications.²⁴ Horn learnt every thing he was taught; every body loved him, and, most of all, Rymenyld, the king's own daughter. Thus the prince is exhibited with all the excellencies that his minstrel poet valued. But the author makes him to act nobly, as well as learn. When the princess reveals her love to him, his sense of honor prompts him to tell her, that he is not worthy of her regard, because in her father's estimation he was but a servant and foundling, and that there could be no marriage affinity between a slave and a king.²⁵ Seeing her grief at this honorable recollection, he proposes to get dubbed a knight, that he may be relieved from his servile state, and be in a situation to acquire fame and honors. She acquiesces in his counsel. The king raises him to the coveted rank, and bids him be a good knight.²⁶

Horn is now represented as feeling all the duties of his new dignity. He still gives honor the superiority to love; and reminds the princess, that before he can wed her, he must ride with his spear and prove his knighthood. He purposes to do acts of prowess, and, if he survives, he promises to claim her hand.²⁷ Thus the hero is made to conquer the temptations to self-gratification at that age when reason and virtue are found most irresolute. The reader may pursue this view of the romance; but enough has been said to

²⁴ Ritson's Metrical Rom. v. 2. p. 93.

²⁵ Ich am a born thral;
Thy fater's fundlyng withal.
Of kunde rae ne sekde,
Thee to spouse welde.
It nere no fair weddyng

Bitween a thral and a Kyng.—Ib. p. 109.

²⁶ Ib. p. 112.

²⁷ Ib. p. 113.

BOOK
VIII.HISTORY OF
ENGLISH
POETRY.

shew that the bard was attempting to draw a pattern of knightly excellence.

In the romance of Iwain and Gawin, we see another poet attempting to elevate the manners of his contemporaries. He represents Arthur as a model of kingly merit:—

Of all knyghts he bare the pryse.
In world was none so war ne wise.
True he was in alkin thing;
Als it byfel to swilk a kyng.²⁸

So at the monarch's grand Whitsun festival, he describes the lords and ladies, "knyghtes and damisels," as conversing on the excellencies of other knights. He says, they talked

- - - - - Curtaysly
Of deeds of arms and of venery:
And of good knyghts that lyfed then;
And how men might them kyndely ken,
By doghtines of their good deed,
On ilka syde, wharesum they yede.²⁹

He ventures even to urge his contemporaries explicitly to greater virtue than they practised, by reproaching the present time with the merit of the past:—

They told of more truth them between,
Than now among men here is seen.
For truth and love is all bylaft,
Men uses now another craft;
With worde men makes it true and stabil,
But in their faith is noght but fabil.³⁰

But it would lead to a tedious length to instance the little details of merit which this and the other old romances make their characters display, and which must have beneficially impressed the readers whom they interested. The principle is universal,

²⁸ Ritson's *Metrical Romances*, vol. 1. p. 1.

²⁹ *Ib.* vol. 1. p. 2.

³⁰ *Ib.* p. 2.

that every composer of fictitious narratives depicts his actors and tales with a meliorating spirit. He paints them to be admired, and he necessarily makes them as estimable as he can. The more perfect his taste, the more perfect will be his delineations.³¹

The troubadours had also their romances. Of those which originated among themselves, only three have descended to us in their provençal language;³² but they appear to have had among them all those which were composed or translated by the Trouveurs and Anglo-Norman poets; and some others probably of their own composition.³³ The romances peculiar to Germany, do not appear to have been known in England during the middle ages, nor to have exercised any influence on our poetry or imaginative literature.³⁴

CH.
II.
ENGLI
ROMAN

³¹ The confusion of chronology and costume, in our old romances, has been remarked. But our old poets may be pardoned for an error which even the finest painters of more improved ages exhibit. Titian, in a picture of 'the Presentation of Christ to the people,' inserted Spanish pages, and over the shields of the Roman soldiers, has placed the Austrian eagle. Tintoretto, in a painting on sacred history, armed his Jews with fusils; and Paul Veronese has introduced Switzers, Levanters and other modern costumes, into 'our Lord's Supper.' He so offended against good taste and history in this point, that his pictures have been called 'The Beautiful Masquerades.'—Algarotti sopra la Pittur, p. 137.

³² Two of these are poems: GERARD DE ROSILLON, containing 8000 verses. It is on the wars between its hero, the Count of Rousillon, and Charles Martel, and may have been written about the beginning of the twelfth century, or perhaps before; and JAUFRE, fils de Doyon, is dedicated to a king of Arragon, either Alphonso II. King of Arragon, who died 1196, or his son Peter, who fell in 1213; he is represented as one of the Knights of the Round Table. It extends to 10,000 lines. The other, PHILOMENA, is a rare roman, on the exploits of Charlemagne against the Saracens. As it mentions Becket's death, it was written after 1173, but before the century closed.—Raynouard, v. 2. p. 283-293.

³³ Besides these three works, we cannot doubt the existence of a great number of other romances, written in the language of the Troubadours, of which the MSS. have perished or remain still unknown.' Rayn. p. 294. This gentleman then enumerates those which are mentioned in the surviving poems of the Troubadours, 295-319. Of these, Tristan is mentioned by Rambaud d'Orange; by Bernard de Ventadom, Bertrand du Born, Arnaud de Marueil, and others. It was therefore known in Provençal before the year 1200.

³⁴ The most ancient of these is the short one on Hildebrand, which

BOOK
VIII.HISTORY OF
ENGLISH
POETRY.

It has been allotted to Great Britain to have opened, in the first part of the nineteenth century, a new fountain of improved moral taste, conception and feeling to all Europe, by compositions of the nature of those which are the subject of this chapter, in the tales and romances of Sir Walter Scott. We see them already (1830) to be found so interesting as to be translated, or in the process of translation, into French, German, Danish, Swedish, Dutch and Russian. The other languages of Europe will soon appropriate them, and imitations have already been begun by most of these nations, and by Spaniards and Italians. They who know what the most popular novels and romances of France and Germany have been, and what strange and mischievous beau ideals they often presented to us, and what fallacious theories of diseased minds have been floating thro the world, will perceive how greatly the general as well as the literary mind and heart of Europe will be benefited by the productions of that inexhaustible Genius, who always kindles in his readers favorable impressions and recollections of the best sympathies, good principles, a spirit of rectitude and honor, and an increased desire for the reputation and advantage which our most laudable sensibilities will most amply bestow.

mentions Irmin as the God of War, and has been published from a Fulda MS. of the eighth century. Mr. Weber has printed the original in the appendix to his *Illust. North. Antiq.* p. 215, with Eccard's Latin translation and his own English version. The *Book of Heroes*; or the *Adventures of the emperor Ottnit*, and of *Hugh and Wolf Dietrich*, were written by the knight *Wolfran*, who flourished in 1207. See these in Mr. Weber's work, p. 45-166. The *Wilkina Saga* and *Niflunga Saga*, the most comprehensive of the Scandinavian romances, was composed 1250. Weber gives the substance of it, 29-37. The *Song of the Nibelungen*, which is quoted in the *Wilkina Saga* as very ancient, was probably written in the eleventh century. The existing copy of it is a modernized work. See it in Weber, 167-210. The other pieces, by him and Mr. Jamieson, in this volume, deserve the notice of those who are curious on these subjects.

C H A P. III.

On the Troubadours — The Spirit and Subjects of their Poetry — Its Cultivation by the English Princes and Nobility — Causes of its Decline — Its Language and Origin.

THE Provençal poetry and the Troubadours became connected with our nation and its literature soon after the year 1150; and as their effects upon our old English poetry have not been sufficiently attended to, nor some of the most curious facts respecting them, which concern our sovereigns and their families, generally known, it would be an imperfection in the literary history of our country if we omitted to notice them: altho the limits necessarily allotted to each department of our great subject, will cause our remarks on them to be compressed and concise.

POETRY OF
THE TROU-
BADOURS.

All that has survived to us of this Provençal poetry was composed, with one single exception, after the accession of Henry II. in 1154, to his English crown, and principally before the death of his grandson Henry III. in 1272; altho some few of its remains may be extended into the reign of Edward I. who died in 1307. It is with this portion only that England is concerned, and indeed from that time it began to disappear from the world as a distinct and particular school and class of poetical productions, while Spain, Sicily, Italy and every other country gradually evolved and cultivated a vernacular description of versified literature from indigenous stems, and peculiar to their respective manners, tastes and inclinations, which

BOOK
VIII.HISTORY OF
ENGLISH
POETRY.

have now become so many distinct species of national poetry.

It was in the southern regions of the present France, which were then more usually called Aquitania, extending from the Loire to the Pyrenees, that the artists of this poetry appeared under the name of Troubadours.¹ All parts of Europe had their ancient professors of pierian inspiration, under various titles. The Celtæ had their bards, the Northmen, scalds; the Germans, mennesingers; the Anglo-Saxons, minstrels; the Normans, and France in its small primitive extent, *trouveurs*; but beyond the Loire to the Garonne, and thence into Spain, the composers of this kind of literature acquired the denomination of Troubadours, a word expressive of an analogous meaning to that of poetai in Greece.²

The earliest poetry which we now possess from the Troubadours, is derived from Aquitania, and consists of the compositions of our queen Eleanor's grandfather, William V. who was the ninth duke of Aquitaine, and also count of Poitou, as the eleventh century was expiring.³ The poems of his

¹ The duchy of Aquitania was at first only that of Guyenne, and consisted of Gascony with Bourdeaux, Lannes and Bazas. Bouchet. *Ann. Aquit.* p. 110. Marriages and acquisitions extended it afterwards to comprise Auvergne and Poitou.

² 'E saup ben trobar et cantar.' 'He knew well how to trobar and sing,' is said of the comte de Poitiers, in the Provençal notices of his life in Renouard *Choix Troub.* v. 5. p. 115. The primitive meaning of trobar is, 'to invent,' from which it was applied to signify the composition of verses. Hence troubadour is an *inventor*, as *trouver* and poeta, being formed from *facere*, to make, signify a maker. The Anglo-Norman *trouveur* being derived from *trouver*, to invent or find out, has the same meaning. The Anglo-Saxon term for poet was 'scop,' from 'sceopian,' to create or shape. Thus, each of these nations considered a poet to be a maker or inventor. Even the word 'bard' seems to have come from an original term of the same sort, preserved in the Hebrew 'bara,' to create.

³ The preceding ancestors of this duke were William, called Tete d'Estoupes, whose two wives were Agnes of Sanzay, and Adomald, daughter of the count of Flanders. Baron de Couteaux *Mem. Aquit.*

CHAP.
III.POETRY OF
THE TROU-
BADOURS.

younger age are like his life at that time, disgracefully licentious;⁴ but he lived to feel the evil of the immoralities, so far as to proclaim his altered sentiments in one of his poems, which have survived to us, when he yielded to St. Bernard's exhortations to undertake an expiatory crusade.⁵ This expedition in 1101 became singularly disastrous; but resuming his harp on his safe return to Poitou, he had the spirit or the indifference, to make the miseries of his calamitous journey the amusing subject of a poetical composition.⁶

P. 25. He died in 1025. Bouchet, p. 123. His son Guy married Aldearda, a princess of Navarre. Cout. p. 26. Their son William, who was the eighth duke, had for his wives, Gilbon the daughter of the Norman Duke William Longsword, and Joan the heiress of the count of Tholouse. **ib. 28.** He died in 1086, leaving two children. Hugues Haymon, who succeeded to his mother's inheritance of Toulouse, and became, on the crusades, duke of Antioch in Palestine. **ib. 32,** and Bouchet, 125. And William, the ninth duke of Aquitania, mentioned in the text.

⁴ William of Malmesbury describes his profligate habits. **ib. 170.** He had the portrait of one of his women painted on his shield. **ib.** Nine of his poems remain; mostly of an unbecoming nature. St. Palaye has given, as far as decency allowed, the substance of one of his pieces. **Hist. Troub. v. 1. p. 8-10.** The original of this is in Renouard, v. 5. p. 118-120; and some fragments of others, p. 115-118; and v. 3. p. 1-5. He is acknowledged by all to be the most ancient of the Troubadours, whose writings have survived to us.

⁵ In this, 'He bids farewell to the Limousin, to Poitou, to the chivalry which he had so much loved, and to the worldly vanities, which he designates by colored garments, and by handsome chausses.' He commits the care of Poitou to his cousin the count of Anjou, and prays the king, his feudal chief, to protect his son, then a child, against his neighbours and vassals. St. Palaye, 1. p. 14.—Ordericus describes him as bold and honorable, but too jocund; ever surpassing the facetos histriones by his numerous facetiis. **Eccl. Hist. p. 789.** He had offered to pledge his duchy to our William Rufus for an advance of money; and the king was preparing to take possession of Aquitain, when he fell in the new forest. **ib. 780.**

⁶ His crusade was singularly unfortunate: he left Aquitania at the head of 300,000 followers, who had collected around him from Spain and the south of France; (**Ord. p. 789.**) and marching thro Macedonia, passed over the Bosphorus into Cappadocia, where others joined him, till the forces, on being reviewed, were found to be 500,000 men. **ib.** The Grecian emperor not supplying him with the guide he desired, he marched back and attacked Constantinople for several days. Alexis then submitting, and furnishing him with conductors, they proceeded onward, thro Asia Minor, in great distress for provisions, where Soliman, with the main body of the Turks, came upon them in a disadvantageous position. After

BOOK
VIII.HISTORY OF
ENGLISH
POETRY.

He survived his unfortunate adventure twenty-five years,⁷ and appears to have resumed his disreputable depravities.⁸

If the manners of the nobles of Poitou and Guienn at that period resembled those of this their feudal sovereign, it will account for some of the circumstances attending the Troubadours and the themes of the poetry, which we shall presently notice. But the Aquitanian dukes had not been always of this description;⁹ altho a splenetic description of the gentry of these parts as the same eleventh century began, tends rather to create an unfavorable impression, beyond the mere difference of costume, which it most pointedly reprobates.¹⁰ Aquitania had been a kingdom

a battle of five days, the Christians, partly from treachery and panic, gave way, and were cut to pieces by the conquering Mohamedans. For thousand fell in the field: the rest fled; and the duke of Aquitania with others, lurked in caverns and forests, till he got to Antioch, 'pauper et mendicus,' with only six followers. Ord. Vit. 790-3. Malmesbury estimates all who perished at 100,000. p. 149. The count went to Jerusalem to perform his devotions there, and got safe back to Poitou, and 'there sang the miseries of his expedition, as he was *jocundus et lepidus* in rimed verses with *facetis modulationibus*.' Ord. Vit. 793.

⁷ He died in 1126. Ord. Vit. p. 884.

⁸ His building an abbey for strumpets, and appointing over them prioress, and there singing his jollities and debauchery, (Malm. 170.) remind us of our John Wilkes in his youth, and his profligate monks and monastery in Buckinghamshire. The duke drove away his wife, (Malm. ii.) but in 1119 she went resolutely to the council, which Calixtus II. was holding in France, and 'with a high and clear voice complaining eloquently of the insult, she desired to be permitted to take another husband, whom she named. The council listened respectfully to the animated Hildegard, but the Pope only summoned the duke to plead his reasons his tribunal at Rome, or to receive her again as a lawful wife, or to undergo his damnable excommunication.' Ord. Vit. 859.

⁹ The William Dux Aquitania in the year 1000, is mentioned, by an old chronicler, to have been 'from his childhood doctus literis, to have possessed great knowledge of the scriptures, to have kept abundance of books in his palace, and to have applied every vacant hour to reading especially in the long winter evenings.' Frag. Aquit. Hist. p. 81.

¹⁰ Robert king of France, who acceded in 997, married Constance, princess of Poitou. Many of her relations and countrymen followed her to Paris, who are thus described by Glaber Rodolphus: 'Full of the most conceited levity; their manners and dress equally fantastic; their arms and trappings without taste; bare (cropped) from the middle

CHAP.
III.POETRY OR
THE TROU-
BADOURS.

under the grandson of Charlemagne; but after his death, Charles the Bald lowered it into a duchy, and made one of his kinsmen from Burgundy its first duke.¹¹ His next successors founded the celebrated abbey of Cluny, and by appointing Ebles the count of Poitou his heir, occasioned the addition of this province to the ancient Aquitania.¹² Both these possessions descended to the duke William V., who was son of the poetical and profligate Troubadour, and who became the father of our ancient queen Eleanor. The lives of both the parent and daughter were sufficiently singular, and shew us how much the spirit and incidents of romance were then really actuating human life. The penitential feeling came so strongly on this William, that he determined to relinquish his splendid greatness, and to lead a life of severe and unknown penance. He had only two daughters, Eleanor and Alice. By a testamentary instrument he recommended his daughter Eleanor to the protection of the king of France; expressing hopes that he would marry her to Louis, his son and intended successor, and bequeathed to her both Aquitaine and Poitou. To his other daughter, Alice, or Peronella, he left his castles and hereditary possessions in Burgundy.¹³ Having completed this arrangement, he began a pilgrimage to St. James of

their heads; their beards shaven like minstrels; their boots and shoes most unbecoming; wholly void of all good faith in their pacific compacts; whose abominable examples infected all the nation of the Franks and Burgundians, till then honestissima, and drew it into a conformity with all their nequitia and turpitudine.' Hist. p. 39. His added verses stigmatize them also for their 'trunca veste; consilio muliebre; fraus; raptus; nullus honor sanctis; nulla reverentia sacris.' Ib.

¹¹ Bouchet, Aquit. 109, 110.

¹² Ib. 114, 115. Baron de Couteaux, 21-23.

¹³ This will is inserted by Couteaux in his Orig. Poictev. p. 33. It also bequeaths 1000 pounds to be divided 'among all the monasteries of my dominions, as my barons shall think proper.' Ib.

BOOK
VIII.HISTORY OF
ENGLISH
POETRY.

Compostella in Spain,¹⁴ and on this journey in 1137, in order to complete unalterably his seclusion from the world, he pretended to die, and caused himself to be buried.¹⁵ The fact of his death became universally believed and acted upon. Eleanor, then about thirteen years of age, took possession of her dominions, and was soon afterwards married to Louis VII. king of France;¹⁶ and her sister to the count de Vermandois.

But while the world supposed him to be decaying in the grave, he went secretly to Rome, where he confided his projected penance to the Pope, and from thence travelled in disguise to Jerusalem; returning thence to station himself in a retired hermitage, on a mountain in a desert in Tuscany, where he died in 1156, unknown to all but to his religious friends to whom he had intrusted the well kept secret.¹⁷

Eleanor on her part was not less eccentric. She accompanied her husband, Louis VII. on his crusade with the emperor Conrad into Palestine,¹⁸ where she met her uncle Aymon, who had become prince of Antioch.¹⁹ Finding that her husband would not support him against the victorious Saracens, she entered into some intrigues with the celebrated Saladin for Aymon's advantage. She is charged by the old

¹⁴ Ord. Vit. p. 909.

¹⁵ Bouchet, p. 131. Orderic only mentions, as he only knew and believed, that he died at the altar of St. James, on the 6 Feria parasceve 5 Idus Ap. 1137. p. 909.

¹⁶ The king of France in the same year sent his son with an army to Aquitain, to secure both the heiress and the province; and dying in that summer, her young husband was crowned as Louis VII.; 'and thus united the kingdom of France with the duchy of Aquitain, which no one had done before.' Ord. Vit. p. 911.

¹⁷ Bouchet, p. 134. Couteaux, p. 34. From him arose the order of the Hermits Guillemins, who were also called Blancs Manteaux. Ib. 34. Bouch. 139.

¹⁸ They went, on St. Bernard's instigation, to Palestine in 1145. Chron. Norm. p. 982.

¹⁹ Bouch. 138.

DURING THE MIDDLE AGES.

chronicler with projects more dishonorable. She was beautiful and graceful. Saladin became attached to her, and she is said to have meditated the design of leaving her husband, and of marrying the celebrated Mohamedan.²⁰ Louis, apprised of her wishes, hastened back with her to France,²¹ and there expressed both his belief and his apprehensions of her intention, by procuring a divorce from her on the plea of affinity, altho he had two daughters by her. This measure was so unexpected, that she fainted in her chair on receiving the communication, and was for two hours unable either to speak or to weep.²² But she was not long before she inflicted on him all the pains of political regret. The divorce for consanguinity made the marriage null from the beginning, and therefore left her as a single woman, with all her inheritance as her own property in her own power. Our Henry II. was then awaiting in Normandy the crown of England on Stephen's death; and finding her at liberty for a second choice, with Aquitaine and Poitou at her disposal, and not above twenty-seven

²⁰ Couteaux, p. 35. Bouchet, 139.

²¹ He returned from Jerusalem to Paris in 1148. Chron. Norm. 984. The baron de Couteaux thus states this curious affair from 'nos vieilles histoires.' Saladin, at an interview with the Christian king 'became so enamored of her, that he complied with all her wishes, and sent back the Christian prisoners she desired, and particularly Saldebruiel de Sanzay and Geoffry Remacin, who had borne high commands, honorably treated and clothed. The king her husband, and her uncle the old duke of Antioch, wanted her to take advantage of her ascendancy, and draw Saladin and his army into an ambuscade, that they might be destroyed. But she refused, and returned Saladin's courtesies with equal civilities. This rendered her obnoxious to Louis and to the Christians there, who persuaded him that she meant to give herself up to the Saracen prince, and abandon her husband, her inheritance and her religion. The king, jealous of her conduct, and seeing his crusade not successful, threw all the blame on her; and, adding hatred to hatred in his mind, determined to divorce her; which he effected after their arrival in France.' Orig. des Poitevins, p. 35. ed. 1643.

²² Bouchet, p. 141. The divorce was obtained in 1151. Chron. Norm. p. 985.

years of age, and with a pleasing and elegant person, he proposed himself immediately to be her husband. She soon assented, and they were married, to the alarm and vexation of Louis, who now perceived that his daughters by her, Maria and Alice, would be divested of the splendid inheritance.²³

It was this lady who became by her taste and patronage the great reviver of the Provençal poetry, and, in conjunction with her daughter Maria,²⁴ the exciting cause of its most distinguishing subject and productions. By her marriage with Henry, she annexed the feudal sovereignty of all the regions from the Loire to the Pyrennees, and the actual possession of her father's lands, towns and castles in Poitou, to the English crown. Soon after this event, those Troubadour poets arose, and became distinguished, whose works, with the ducal effusions already noticed, constitute all that we now possess of the old Provençal poetry.²⁵ As we read these poems, and think of that most singular institution which was then prevailing in these parts, in which this lady, our queen Eleanor, occupied a very leading station, and with which she actively united herself, the reasoning mind cannot

²³ Chron. Norm. 985. Bouchet, 142.

²⁴ Of these daughters, Maria was, in due time, married to the count of Champagne. He was the son of Theobald, the preceding count. He went to the crusades, where he is described as a generous, wise, brave and magnanimous youth.—Gesta Lud. p. 150. His sister Alice was wedded to her brother, Theobald count de Blois. Ib. 158.

²⁵ All the Troubadours, after the earlier count, whose works remain and whose biography is noticed by St. Palaye and Renouard, were all born or acquired notice, and wrote after the marriage of Henry II. to Eleanor, and after his accession to the English throne in 1154. Bernard de Ventadeur thus alludes to her:

With joy I begin my song,
Ugonet! courteous messenger!
Sing my lay willingly
To the queen of the Normans.—Rayn. v. 2. p. 169.

avoid connecting them together, and inferring a characterizing association and reciprocal influence.

CHAP.
III.

POETRY OF
THE TROU-
BADOURS.

It is well known that the ancient kings of Europe, during the middle ages, held their stately courts of dignity and festivity for their nobles and gentry at the great festivals of Easter, Whitsuntide, and Christmas. It appears that queen Eleanor, and her daughter Maria, and some other great ladies, their relations or associates, held also their female courts in imitation of those of their lords, but which, from their great purpose and subject, were named "Cours d'Amour," or Courts of Love. While these were thought to have been mentioned only by the antiquated and often incorrect Nostradamus, they were not much credited.²⁶ But the treatise of Andreas, the chaplain of Pope Innocent IV. and of the royal household in France, written in the twelfth century, having been found to describe them, the certainty of their existence became historically established;²⁷ and his account presents us with what in these days we can have no difficulty in calling a picture of the most complete and respectable profligacy, which queens and noble females, who have aspired to character, honor and esteem, have ever sanctioned and realized,

²⁶ There were two writers of this name, with different christian names. The one who wrote the History of Provence, and Jehan, who composed the lives of 'Les plus célèbres et anciens Poets Provençaux;' printed at Lyons, 1575.

²⁷ His work was printed in 1610, with the title, 'Erotica sive Amatoria, Andree, Capillani Regis,' at Dorpmund, and in 1614 at Tremonia. Menckenius mentions it as 'Tractatus Amoris, Andree Capillani,' of Innocent IV.—Misc. Lips. Nova. v. 8. p. 545. The MS. in the Royal Library at Paris, No. 8,758, has in its second title, 'Incepit liber amandi et de reprobatione amoris, editus et compilatus a Mag. Andrea, Francorum aulæ Regiæ Capillano.' It is to M. Renouard that we owe the notice and addition of this work to the History of the Troubadours, in his *Choix des Troub.* v. 2, and from whom I have taken the facts of this note. Fabricius, in his *Bibl. Lat. Med.* places Andreas in 1170.

BOOK
VIII.HISTORY OF
ENGLISH
POETRY.

tho sufficiently congenial with what Eleanor's ducal grandfather had both sung and practised.

These Courts of Love were a formal assembly of some of the great ladies of the province, under the presidency of one of their highest rank, to receive all questions concerning the attachments, which they were pleased to call love, that others, either private gentry or Troubadour disputants, chose to submit to their decision. These they deliberated upon, and determined by a sort of judicial sentence, which it was expected that the appealing parties should obey. If the topics had been doubts or difficulties on matters of honorable affection, the meetings might have been no more harmful or censurable than races, county balls, musical festivals, rural fêtes, or any other device which the gentry of a county chose to make the occasion of their large social meetings for acquaintance and amusement. But, unfortunately, all that was moral or creditable in the affectionate sympathies was only proposed to be condemned or excluded; and the discussions and verdicts appear to have been appropriated to those intimacies of which every one ought to have been ashamed, and especially ladies, who were distinguished for title, influence, and public reputation.

Andreas has preserved to us three of the questions and judgments of our queen Eleanor on this subject; two of her first daughter, the countess of Champagne, and four more, of some other ladies.²⁸ It is those of the queen and countess that only need to be noticed in the present History.

²⁸ The other ladies, whose judgments in the Cours d'Amour are recorded by Andreas, are, Ermengarde viscountess of Narbonne, the countess of Flanders, and the ladies of Gascony.

CHAP.
III.POETRY OF
THE TROU-
BADOURS.

The inquiry brought before the Lady-court of the countess, was whether love; that is, what they chose to call by that name, could subsist between married people?²⁹ and her most congenial decision, in 1174, that it could not, expressively characterizes the moral principles of this illustrious community.³⁰ That the royal mother had no greater scruples or delicacy on this subject than her fair daughter, she unhesitatingly avowed, by grounding her own corresponding sentence in another case, on the authority of the preceding determination.³¹ Indeed that Eleanor was not very anxious to encourage any conduct in her sex that might have a resemblance to virtue or prudence, or even to a pride which should have any tincture of either, we may believe from another of her love-tribunal judgments.³² The only one of those reported,

²⁹ 'Utrum inter conjugatos amor possit habere locum.'—Andr. fol. 56.

Raynouard, cvii.

³⁰ 'We say and we decide, for an established rule, that love cannot extend its powers between two wedded persons, because lovers bestow all things on each other gratis, without the compulsion of any reason or necessity. But the married are bound by duty to their mutual regard, and cannot deny any thing to each other. This our judgment, delivered with extreme caution, and confirmed by the opinion of many ladies, shall be to you for an indubitable and constant truth.' Dated 1174, 3 Kal. Mai. Andreas, fol. 56. Rayn. cvii. Savari de Mauleon, in his tenson with two other Troubadours, Faidit and Hugues, thus mentions her, and alludes to her court:—

I wish it to be judged
By the conqueror, my heart's guardian,
And by lady Maria, where there is a good prize.

Rayn. v. 2. p. 205.

³¹ A knight submitted to her court, that he was in love with a lady, who, when attached to another, had promised him that he should share her regard if she should ever be deprived of that suitor. She married this suitor, and the knight then claimed the fulfilment of her promise. She refused him, alleging that she had not lost the love of him who was now her husband.

The queen pronounced this decision: 'We dare not oppose the sentence of the countess of Champagne, who has settled by a firm judgment, that love cannot extend its powers between two wedded persons. We therefore approve that the lady should perform her promise.' Andreas, fol. 96. Rayn. cx.

³² A knight stated to her female judicature, that, while the favored

BOOK
VIII.HISTORY OF
ENGLISH
POETRY.

which reflects any credit upon her memory, is that which discountenances the mercenary conduct of those who, while they preserved their virtue, chose to accept the present which was given to purchase its dereliction. She required the immoral conduct which she favored to be at least disinterested.³³ With these deliberations and opinions before us, we may feel that the fair Rosamond had some right to accuse this self-indulging queen of inconsistent cruelty in her connubial persecution of imprisonment at least, if not of the offered bowl and dagger: as the attachment between this celebrated lady of tradition and Eleanor's husband, Henry II. was precisely of that nature which in their *Cours d'Amour* both the queen and her daughter had pronounced to be the only legitimate affection.³⁴ But she lived long enough to

lover of a lady, he had asked and obtained her leave to pay attentions to another. He stayed away for the unusual time of a month, and when he came back assured her that he had not availed himself of her permission, as his only object had been to make a trial of her constancy. She immediately repelled him as unworthy of her regard; declaring that such a leave asked and granted was a sufficient reason for depriving him of her love. The knight complained to Eleanor's court on this severity.

The queen's determination was, 'We know that it proceeds from the nature of affection, that lovers often, with a false simulation, pretend to desire new attachments, in order to ascertain the faith and constancy of the beloved. She, then, who on this account suspends her attentions to her suitor, or refuses her future regard to him, counteracts the very nature of love, unless she certainly knows that the fidelity pledged to herself has been recently broken by him.'—fol. 92. Rayn. 113.

³³ A knight sought a lady's regard, but she absolutely refused it. He offered her some becoming presents, which she accepted with a cheerful countenance and eager mind, but yet did not in the least soften into any regard, but continued her peremptory denial. The knight pleaded to the court, that by taking from him presents, *congruentia amoris*, she had given him an expectation of her love, which now, without a cause, she was endeavoring to destroy.

The queen answered, 'A woman may refuse presents offered with a view to love; but if she takes them, she must grant a compensation for the gifts of affection, or must patiently bear to be classed among the strumpet community.' fol. 97. As if the compensation would have less degraded her.

³⁴ Another judgment of lady Maria shews part of the manners of the day: To one, not very faithful, a lady commanded that he should no

see and feel the folly, if not the wickedness, of her licentious jurisprudence, and may have repented of its unsocial and unfelicitating depravity.

CHAP.
III.

POETRY OF
THE TROU-
BADOURS.

These courts are noticed occasionally in the poems of the Troubadours. Those held at Pierrefeu and Signé, in Provence, are mentioned by Giraud and Peyronet in their *tenson*, or dispute, which they agreed to send thither for decision;³⁵ and the names of the chief ladies, who formed the courts in these two places, have survived to us.³⁶ Those of the court at Romanin, at a later period, are also preserved, of whom the first was the aunt of Petrarch's celebrated

more contend in public on her behalf, nor presume to express any praises of her among other people. But happening afterwards to be in company with some other knights, he heard them speak very disgraceful things of her. Awhile he bore it, tho' indignant; but as they continued their attacks, he at last resented it, and defended her. She immediately deprived him of her regard, because he had disobeyed her.

On his complaint, the countess, in her *Cour d'Amour*, gives this sentence: 'This lady was too severe in her commands when she bound him by that promise; nor has he sinned in reproving her calumniators by a just correction. She bound him unjustly by her injunction.'—Andreas, fol. 92. Rayn. 112.

* Giraud thus declares, that he will appeal to the court of Pierrefeu:
I shall conquer you if the court be loyal;
I will transmit my *partement* to Pergafeut,
Where the Beautiful One holds the court of instruction.

Peyronet, in answer, declares his preference for that of Signé:
I wish for myself for the judgment
The honored castle of Sinha.—Raynouard, p. 92-3.

* The presiding ladies were,—

Stephanette, dame de Beaux, the daughter of the
count de Provence.
Adelazie, viscountess d'Avignon.
Alalete, dame d'Ongle.
Hermysse, dame de Porquieres.
Bertrane, dame d'Urgon.
Mabille, dame d'Yeres.
La countesse d'Dye.
Rostanque, dame de Pierrefeu.
Bertrane, dame de Signé.
Jauderaude de Claustral.—Nostrad. p. 27.

BOOK
VIII.HISTORY OF
ENGLISH
POETRY.

Laura.³⁷ These courts were sometimes very numerous,³⁸ and they were attended usually by all the provincial gentry, for the puerile, and not very salutary, amusement of hearing these love-connected deliberations.³⁹

Whatever may have been the more ancient origin of the Provençal poets in their earlier form and subjects of composition, the comparison of the chronology of those who are known to have appeared after Eleanor's grandfather, with their compositions which remain to us, lead us to the conclusion, that to these courts of love, and to the spirit which they diffused; to the desire and means of distinction which they presented, and to the subjects which they suggested; we owe most of these Troubadours, and of the poetry which time has allowed to reach us. Love and usually such love as these lady-judges chose to deem so, and to patronize—are the continual subjects

³⁷ The ladies here noticed were,—

Phanette des Gautelmes, dame de Romanin: Laurette de Sade was her niece.

La Marquise de Malespine.

La Marquise de Saluces.

Clarette, dame de Baux.

Laurette de St Laurens.

Cecille Rascasse, dame de Caromb.

Hugonne de Sabran, fille du comte Forcalquier.

Heleine, dame de Mont Pahon.

Ysabelle de Bovrilhons, dame d'Aix.

Ursyne des Ursieres, dame de Montpellier.

Alaette de Meolhon, dame de Curbau.

Elys, dame de Meyrarques.—Nostredamus, p. 131.

³⁸ On the question submitted to the countess of Flanders, Andreas says, that she convened to her court sixty ladies, in order to settle the sentence. Fol. 98. Rayn. p. cxviii.

³⁹ Nostradamus mentions in his life of the Troubadour Marcabius, that his mother was a learned woman, well skilled in good letters, and a famed Provençal poet. She held her open Cour d'Amour at Avignon, to which all the poets, gentlemen and gentlewomen of the country came, in order to hear the discussions of the questions and tensons of love which were proposed and sent by the seigneurs and ladies of all the neighbourhood and bordering places.—Rayn. xciv.

of their effusions. It seems to have become a fashion in the Aquitanian regions, for ladies to be passionately addressed by those who were not their husbands; and many became Troubadours, in order to be more prevailing, and to combine the intellectual with the material gratification.

The Troubadours are manifestly divisible into two divisions. The great, who composed such poems, in order to sing, enforce or proclaim their attachments, and occasionally their enmities, and other views and feelings; and inferior or less affluent persons, both bourgeois and knights, who assumed the profession and habits of a Troubadour for its pecuniary and elevating advantages. Thus, some of them were kings, sovereign princes, counts, marquisses, viscounts, barons, seigneurs and noble knights, and even priests and bishops.⁴⁰ These were Troubadours to please the fair sex—to shine in the Cours d'Amour—to gain literary fame—to excel each other—to satirize those whom they disliked, and to take the lead in all the public festivities, or to acquire fame and influence. Others were gentlemen without property, or poor knights seeking money and notice, or humble-born plebeians pressing into that inviting avenue to the circles of greatness, fashion, wealth and banqueting, which the popularity and practice of this “gai science,” this “art de trobar,” as it was called, opened to those who

CHA
III.

POETRY
THE TROU-
BADOUR

⁴⁰ As Alphonso II. king of Arragon; our Richard II.; Geoffroi Rudel, prince of Blaye, near Bordeaux; Rambaud, prince of Orange; the Dauphine de Avergne; the comte and comtess de Provence; the countess de Die; the marquis Malaspina, Bertrand de Born; viscount de Hautifal; Pons de Capduce; the rich baron of Puy; the baron of Castellans; Bernard Ariaud, seigneur of Montoux; Guillaume de Cabaslaing, a gentleman of Roussillon; Pierre Rogiers, a gentleman of Auvergne; the noble knights Guil. de Balaun and Pierre de Barjac. The priest Izarn, and Folquet, bishop of Toulouse. Of all these, and of some other noblemen, poems remain.

BOOK
VIII.HISTORY OF
ENGLISH
POETRY.

could become eminent in it, or who could interest the aristocracy of the various little courts of Poitou to welcome and reward them.⁴¹

It was not the high-born Troubadours only who sought to be the cecisbeos even to the greatest of the ladies who held and frequented these Cours d'Amour.⁴² Two of the lower class have become notorious for what, in any other costume of society we should think and deem presumptuous aspiration, One of these, Bernard de Ventadeur, dared to become the suitor, the panegyrist, and the cavalier amoroso and sirviante, neither unacceptable nor disdained, of the female majesty of England;⁴³ and the other, Arnaud de Marveil, ventured to be an unreceding competitor with the king of Castile for the criminal love of his patroness the viscountess of Beziers.⁴⁴

⁴¹ Arnaud de Marveil, whom Petrarch terms 'il men famoso Arnaldo,' was born of poor parents in Perigord. The father of Bernard de Ventadeur, whom our queen Eleanor patronized, and whom Petrarch also commended, was a servant. Giraud le Reux was the son of a poor knight, and Pierre Raimond of a bourgeois, as was Gaucet Faidit, the friend of Richard I. We have mentioned before, in this volume, that some of the Jongleurs raised themselves to be Troubadours.

⁴² In the laws and manners promulged and sanctioned by these Cours d'Amour, and in some of the poems of the Troubadours, we see the origin or ancient state of the Italian cecisbeos. Whatever be now their moral character, the discussions and reasonings of the ladies in their Cours d'Amour evince that the attachment which they admitted and applauded was not at all equivocal in its nature when once accepted.

⁴³ 'Agnes de Mentheçon, femme du vicomte Ebles, jeune, belle, vive et enjouée, altho the wife of his master and benefactor, was the first object of the songs du jeune et tendre poète.' The fear of displeasing kept him long silent. Enfin, il osa parler, but she treated him with contempt. He put his disappointment into verse, and afterwards 'assis un jour auprès de la vicomtesse, à l'ombre d'un pin, il en reçut un baiser.' This also was converted into song; but tho the name was disguised, the husband penetrated the truth; and the profligate Troubadour took refuge in the court of queen Eleanor, to repeat the same conduct. We have quoted some of his effusions in our first volume, p. 217, and St Palaye's conclusion is, that to judge par quelques endroits de ses pièces, la princesse n'avoit pas daigné les voux de ce temeraire amant. v 1. p. 33.

⁴⁴ See the extracts from his poems, and other circumstances, in St Palaye, v. 1. p. 72-79. He complained at last that his protectors had become his most cruel enemies, and we see the reason of it in his self-reproach

CHAP.
III.POETRY OF
THE TROU-
BADOURS.

But the disgraceful relaxation of manners among the Troubadour gentry, from the marriage of their main favorer Eleanor with our Henry II. up to the destruction produced by the Albigensian crusades, sanctioned all such moral anomalies. The countess of Die was both a female poet and a femme galante, and avowed her love for the prince of Orange.⁴⁵ He on his part, who acceded to his possessions near Provence in 1150, was also an habitual libertine, and has left verses which shew the grossness of his taste and habits.⁴⁶ But if the thirty-one rules which Andreas has transmitted to us, as forming the code d'amour by which the Cours d'Amour were guided in the twelfth century, were those, as they seem to have been, which the presiding ladies adopted and consulted, we need no other evidence than some of them to convince us,⁴⁷ that female virtue in those classes whose manners set the model for their contemporaries, admitted at that time such large and reputable abstractions, that the lady must have been a firm paragon of solitary excellence who could preserve her real honor unsullied by the corruptions which surrounded her, and unmoved by the sarcasms and resentments of those whom she disdained to imitate, as well as of the more interested whom she would not debase

that he had betrayed himself by his indiscretion de s'être vanté du baiser fatal de la comtesse.' p. 79. She died in 1201, and he lived to compose a moral piece of 400 verses, in which, with a metamorphosed mind, he teaches the art of right conduct in the world, and exhorts us to the fear of God. He exhorts ladies to add wisdom to their beauty. Ib. 80-2.

⁴⁵ St. Palaye, v. 1. 170-6. Raynouard has printed three of her songs, v. 3. p. 22-6, and gives a *free* translation of the first in his v. 2. p. xli.

⁴⁶ St. Palaye, 162-176.

⁴⁷ M. Raynouard has re-printed these from Andreas, in his *Troub.* v. 2. p. cv. The first is, 'causa conjugii ab amore non est excusatio recta.' among the others we find these: 'non decet amare quarum pudor est nuptias affectare—amor nihil posset amori denegare—unam feminam nihil prohibet a duobus amari; et a duabus mulieribus unum.' And. fol. 103.

BOOK
VIII.HISTORY OF
ENGLISH
POETRY.

herself to gratify.⁴⁸ That this dissolute state of society was as unnatural as it was artificial, appears from the fact, that altho the system was publicly known, sang and acted on, yet the judicial ladies were obliged to make it one of their decrees, that if a knight divulged the secret of his intimacies, the highest punishment they could inflict was awarded against him.⁴⁹ The practice was general; but the individual detection of indulging it was, that branding infamy from others which is the true homage compelled to be paid to our natural virtue by the distorting and deteriorating vices. It is creditable to human nature, and illustrative of its fine moral organization, that no power, rank or fashion can prevent what is vicious, from bringing contempt and disgrace on deeds and persons of that description. The profligate cannot but despise each other, and society must reprobate them, because no scheme or confederacy has ever been able to make immorality generally beneficial, or individually honorable.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ The viscountess of Narbonne clears away all doubt of the moral character of their favorite system, by her adjudication, whether there was most affection inter amantes, or inter conjugatos. Her sentence on the two contrasted attachments, was, that they were so different in themselves, and arose from such different manners, that they could not be compared. And. in fol. 94.

⁴⁹ On such a divulging, it was decreed for a perpetual law, by the unanimous assent of all the court of the ladies assembled in Gascony, that the offender should be deprived of all hope of any future attachment; that he should be deemed despicable and disgraced in every court of ladies or of knights; and if any woman should dare to act contrary to this statute, she should incur the same penalty, and be deemed for ever the utter enemy of every probæ feminæ; which epithet, probæ, we may presume they meant to signify of every honorable woman. And. fol. 97.

⁵⁰ But however agreeable their peculiar conduct may have been to the ladies who practised it, we have a terrible instance how their husbands sometimes resented it, in the shocking fate of the Troubadour Guillaume de Cabestant. The Provençal MS. states of him, that he was the Castellan of the county of Roussillon, and becoming a gentleman Troubadour, attached himself to Sermonda, the wife of Raimond of the castle of Roussillon, and wrote his songs upon her. She made him her knight, and took such

Our lion-hearted Richard adopted from his mother a love of this peculiar poetry, and became himself a composing Troubadour, but not an imitator of their dissolute productions. He applied his versifying talents to the more manly subjects which have been stated in a preceding volume of this History.⁵¹ The Troubadour whom Richard most favored, and by whom he was admired and lamented, was Gaucelm Faidit. His poem on his patronizing sovereign has been also noticed in this work.⁵²

CHAP.
III.

POETRY OF
THE TROU-
BADOURS.

Bertrand de Born, one of the noble Troubadours, became one of the greatest enemies both to Henry II. and to Richard. Dante places him in hell for exciting

visible pleasure in his attentions, that the husband imprisoned her in a tower. Cabestant had the folly to write a poem lamenting her imprisonment. Raimond drew him out of the castle, killed him, cut off his head, and took out his heart, which he roasted and carried to his wife as part of a deer. When she had dined on it, he asked her if it was good, and then produced the head of her friend; she answered him, that it was so good, that she would neither eat nor drink any thing more. He drew his sword; she fled to the balcony, and springing from it, perished in the fall. His castle was attacked, for the atrocity of the revenge, and he was himself put to death. Raynouard, v. 5. p. 187-9.

⁵¹ See his two remaining pieces in the first volume of the present Work, p. 402. His mother Eleanor survived him, as well as his father; and after his death in 1199, did homage to Philip at Tours, for the county of Poitou, which then reverted to her as her paternal inheritance. Rigord. p. 200.

⁵² See vol. 1. ib. p. 403. Above sixty of his poems have survived. Raynouard has inserted his life, from a Provençal MS. in his 5th volume. He also raised his eyes to a lady of distinction, Marie de Ventadour: she countenanced him, to become a subject of his songs; but unexpectedly drew a line of virtue, which he could not persuade her to overpass. She sent him to the crusade, to become worthy of her. He returned, to renew his attentions, and she became afraid of his revengeful satire. To relieve her from his addresses, a female friend invited him to be her serviteur d'amant. The attractive proposition succeeded. He renounced his love for the lady Marie, and then the other told him, that she meant to be toujours son amie; but, sans être sa maîtresse. Losing now both the objects of his passions, he composed invectives against love, and even relinquished poetry. Another viscountess allured him to her train, to obtain his panegyrics, and to make him instrumental to her secret depravities with another. His tenson with Hugues is another display of the moral principles of this free and easy fraternity. St. Palaye has narrated his life, with specimens of his poems, v. 1. p. 354-377.

BOOK VIII. the English king's eldest son into an unnatural warfare against his father.⁵³

HISTORY OF
ENGLISH
POETRY.

This young prince was crowned by his parent in 1169, to be his associate in his kingdom, but dying in 1183, as he was preparing to renew his war on his father, Bertrand lost the benefit of his alliance, and lamented his death. He became a violent antagonist to both Richard and his father.⁵⁴ His gallantries were as dissolute as those of his fellow bards and their patrons, but he died at last a repenting monk of Citeaux.⁵⁵

Pierre Vidal was another Troubadour, and one of real genius, whom Henry II. and Richard esteemed and benefited, and who has perpetuated his gratitude for their kindnesses, by his poetical acknowledgement of it.⁵⁶ He avows that the encouragement given by them and others to his profession, induced him to embrace it.⁵⁷ He also pursued its unprincipled passion, and after unavailing songs and sighs, had the insolence to salute in her sleep the wife of the viscomte, who was loading him with favors. Here the lady was more

⁵³ Dante *Infern.* ch. 28.

⁵⁴ We have noticed his sirventes on these incidents, in our first volume, p. 300. His poem on the death of the young king Henry, is in Raynouard, v. 2. p. 183-5.

⁵⁵ See his life in St. Palaye, v. 1. p. 210-248. Raynouard has extracted it fully from the Provençal MSS. in his 5th vol. p. 76-97. This contains a very long detail of his transactions with Henry, Richard, and the other English princes.

⁵⁶ Thus in one piece he exclaims, 'There was in Germany an emperor Frederic; in England a Henry and his three sons; at Toulouse, a courteous count Raimond; and in Catalonia, the brave count de Barcelona, with his son Alphonso; all these lords knew how to discriminate men; they did good and shewed respect to jongleurs and to knights who were in need.' Palaye, v. 2. p. 289. Rayn. v. 5. p. 347. He followed Richard to Palestine.

⁵⁷ 'My father was an excellent singer; a pleasing and richly gifted singer. It would have been natural for me to have resembled him; but learning the gifts and kindness which Henry the king of England, the brave marquis of Montserrat, and a great number of the barons in Lombardy, Catalonia, Gascony and Provence heaped on Jongleurs, I determined to become one. As such I have visited many towns and castles.' Palaye, v. 2. p. 285. Rayn. v. 5. p. 346.

CHAP.
III.POETRY OF
THE TROU-
BADOURS.

virtuous than her husband. She resented the insult, tho he found too much amusement from the Troubadour to do more than to laugh at it as a frolic. She knew his more serious object, and to maintain the purity of her honor, compelled him to depart to Genoa, where he composed many poems of considerable talent to sooth her displeasure and to console himself for his disappointment.⁵⁸ Richard I. also patronized Folquet, who began his career in the same unprincipled way of admiring, singing, and trying to debauch his protector's wife. But she was one of those who began to set the example of an improving spirit, and drove him away in disgrace. He still found high patrons, and among these the Grecian Princess, who married the heir of Castile; but he fell afterwards into a deep melancholy and contrition, became a monk, took the bad direction of inflaming the public spirit against the heretics of Provence, and was at last made bishop of Toulouse, after the persecutors had taken it,⁵⁹ when our Simon de Montfort was made its count.⁶⁰

Many other Troubadours notice England and its princes in their poems, in passages which it is unnecessary to detail, as the preceding facts are sufficient

⁵⁸ Two passages will shew his style: 'Delicious is the air which comes from Provence! I so love that country, that I almost faint with joy when I hear it spoken of; and I wish every word about it were multiplied into an hundred. For I have left my heart among that amiable nation; if I can say or do any thing, it is that which has given me the knowledge and the skill. It is that which has made me a poet and so happy.' Raynouard, v. 3. p. 318. St. Palaye, v. 2. p. 269.

— 'She is killing me; I seek only to celebrate her, and she is thinking but to do me evil. And why? because I wish her welfare more than my own. When she banished me, she only consigned me to my grave. I entered her chamber one morning and stole a kiss: nothing more. I am in flames when I recollect her sweet eyes and beautiful face. But her heart is that of a lion against me. This compelled me to my pilgrimage over the sea.' St. Palaye, v. 2. p. 270, 271.

⁵⁹ See his life in St. Palaye, v. 1. p. 179-205.

⁶⁰ Rigordus, p. 225. Yet Danti puts Folquet into his Paradise: and Petrarch, in his Triumph of Love, has honored him with an encomium.

to indicate their connexion with the English nobility and their sovereigns; and the interest taken in their works.⁶¹ This result must have been increased by Henry III. and his brother marrying the daughters of the last Barcelonian count of Provence, one of the most zealous friends of these poets, and himself a Troubadour.⁶² But this personal effect ceased after the reign of Edward I., and was succeeded by that gradual and intellectual influence of their compositions on the minds of our future poets, which will be noticed in our next chapter. They declined as rapidly as they had emerged into notoriety and popularity; for they had too much of what was pernicious to the best interests of society, and offensive to its improving taste and reason, to obtain any lasting station in the public estimation, or to be perpetuated by its support and sympathy. They were purposely discountenanced by Philip Augustus in his French dominions, as the thirteenth century opened;⁶³ and as

⁶¹ These notices and allusions appear in the *Sirventes Historiques* of Pierre de Vilar, Rayn. v. 4. p. 187; of Bernard de Rovenac, p. 203, 5; of the Dauphin d'Auvergne, p. 256, 8; of Bertrand d'Alamanon, p. 222; and of Rambaud de Vaqueiras, p. 184. 275. They are also in the *Complaintes Historiques* of Giraud de Calanson, p. 65; of Pierre Bremen, p. 71; Gavaudan le Vieux, 85; Peirols, 101; Guillaume de St. Didier, 133. The son of Bertrand de Bois wrote against king John, and befriending Arthur, v. 5. p. 97; and Durand, a sirvante against Henry III. ib. p. 137. Besides these, the baron de Castellane, ib. 108; Perdijon, p. 278; and Rainond de Tors, p. 396, make similar references. The latter mentions Edward I. as well as his uncle Richard, the brother of Henry III.

⁶² St. Palaye, v. 20. 212-4.

⁶³ Rigordus, Phil. p. 178, who thus speaks of them and the *Jongleurs*: 'In the courts of kings and other princes there is a frequent concourse of *histrionum*, who in order to extort from them, gold, silver, horses, and the garments which princes are accustomed to change very often, endeavor to pour forth their *verba joculariâ*, with various adulations. To please the more, in addition to whatever can be probably imagined of these princes, they are profuse of their *delicias et lepores et urbanitates risu dignas*, and other trifles. We have seen princes give them dresses which had been long inventing, and most artificially manufactured with various representations of flowers, on which they had expended twenty or thirty marcs of silver, within seven days after first wearing them.'

it was closing, their peculiar patrons were ruined amid the hostilities and devastations of the Albigensian crusade:⁶⁴ an atrocious war of sanguinary proscription in all the assailants, and disgraceful to England, for having furnished its chief leader and many supporters; but which had the effect of repressing that system of female immorality and gentlemanly corruption which was undermining the domestic virtues and debilitating the human character.⁶⁵

CHAP.
III.

POETRY OF
THE TROU-
BADOURS.

O shame! for the price of such a garment, twenty or thirty poor might have been maintained a whole year. King Philip felt this, and resolved to give all his apparel to the needy; because he learnt from his clergy, that to give them to these hystriouibus was like sacrificing to demons. Rigord. Phil. 178.

⁶⁴ It is painful to the mind to read of this cruel persecution, whatever may have been the demerits of some of the suffering party. Raimond VI. the count of Toulouse, and, like his father, a great encourager of the Troubadours, was mercilessly deprived of his possessions. Beziers, whose vicomtes had always patronized them, was sacked, with the horror of its inhabitants being indiscriminately massacred, whether Catholics or Protestants, on the monk's satanical advice, 'Tuez les tous: Dieu connoit ceux qui sont à lui.' Pal. v. 1. p. 193. A hundred castles of the Provençal nobles were captured or evacuated. Avignon was besieged and taken, tho not till the besiegers had lost 22,000 men before it, and all the adjacent country was plundered and devastated. See this, Hist. Middle Ages, v. 1. p. 442-4. The hostilities were manifestly directed against the chief Troubadour nobility; and, as many of their poems had attacked the ecclesiastical body and its system (see Raynouard's Specimens, v. 2, p. lxi-iii), their satire may have been one of the causes which stimulated the Pope to exhort these crusaders to destroy, *deherent*, all the heretics in that country. Rigordus thus expresses the contents of the letters of Innocent III.:—'To Philip, and all the Princes of his kingdom: Mandaus et præcipiens, quod cum magno exercitu, terram Tholosanum et Albigensium et Cadurcium et partes Narbonnensium et Biterrensiem et alias multas adjacentes, sicut viro Catholici invaderent, et omnes hereticis qui terras illas occupaverant, *deherent*.' Rigord. p. 207. These words embrace nearly all the courts and places where the Troubadours flourished, whose works we now possess, and which preceded this unjustified aggression. I feel no doubt that the papal eye was on the satires of the Troubadours, and on their princely patrons for their congenial feelings, when he penned these letters. The unprotected opinions of the Vaudois, or Waldensian peasantry, would of themselves not have drawn his notice; nor can we ascribe the hostilities he commanded to the moral obliquities of those whom he thus resolved to extirpate, tho his violence was permitted to be the instrument of their correction.

⁶⁵ A recent French work has thus expressed the same opinion: 'Tel fut pour la royaume de Provence l'effet de la conquête de Toulouse par l'armée des croisés. Au lieu d'amour, de grâces et de gaité, on eut les

BOOK
VIII.HISTORY OF
ENGLISH
POETRY.

The language of the Provençals appears to be that Patois-Latin, that mixture of part of the ancient native speech with a larger portion of the language of their Roman conquerors, which, in the tenth century, prevailed in all the regions between the Loire and the Pyrennees, including Catalonia, and in some places extending to the Ebro and into Arragon.⁶⁶ The vernacular language was itself a mixture of some Greek, from the early Grecian colony settled before the Christian æra, at Marseilles, with the primitive Aquitanian. In some parts, the Basque, or Cantabrian; in others, as in Catalonia, the native tongue there, if at all different, may have predominated, and some Arabic terms and phrases may have become mingled during the Mahometan invasions and occupations of Catalonia, Narbonne, Toulouse, and the adjacent parts. But, in the eleventh century, one general or substantially similar language appears to have prevailed amid all the gentry of the country, from Barcelona

barbares du Nord et Saint Dominique. Tout fut fini pour les Provençaux; plus d'amour; plus de gaité; plus de poesie. Moins de vingt ans après la conquête ils étoient presque aussi barbares et aussi grossiers que les Français; que nos pères.—De l'Amour, Paris, 1822. The English reader will be much gratified by the translations of some of the Troubadour poems in English verse, in the 'Lays of the Minnesingers,' published in 1825.

⁶⁶ The oldest authentic specimens of this tongue are the mutual oaths between Louis the Germanique, and his people, in 842, which exists in a single MS. of Nithard. The next is that poem on Boetius, which was preserved in the ancient abbey of Fleury, which M. Raynouard places at the end of the tenth century. See them in his *Troub.* v. 2. p. 3 & 5. Both the language and its poetry are termed '*rustica*;' '*romana*;' and distinguished from the Latin in this line of Pascharius Radbertus, who died in 865:

'*RUSTICA concelebrat ROMANA, latinaque lingua.*'

Ac. Bened. p. 340.

And Helgaldus notices it, about 1000, in his remark that 'King Robert took off his purple vestment, which, in *lingua rustica*, is called *Rocus*.'—Helg. Rob. p. 73. A canon of the council of Tours, in 813, thus distinguishes it from the German tongue, 'Let him translate these homilies into the *rusticam romanam* linguam et *Theotiscam*, so that all may more easily understand them.' Can. 17.

to Bourdeaux. In this common tongue all the Provençal poetry is composed. The "Nobla Leyczon" proves that the Vaudois dialect is identically the same.⁶⁷ It was likewise called the Limousin.⁶⁸ This fact extends it to the vicinity of Catalonia; and, as Zurita remarks that the ancient Arragonian poetry was "en Catalan,"⁶⁹ and the king of Arragon, Alphonso II. has left us a song of his composition, which is in Provençal, altho he was son of a count of Barcelona,⁷⁰ we may believe that there was no difference in the literary language of these countries.

The origin of the Provençal poetry anterior to the earliest specimen of it which has survived to us, is lost amid the darkness of Aquitanian antiquities. The Grecian colonists of Marseilles greatly civilized the Celtic Gauls in the region where they settled.⁷¹ They so largely cultivated what was then termed philosophy, that not only Cicero, in his oratorical praises, called their city a new Athens, and declared it to be superior to Greece;⁷² but Strabo, in a calmer mood, informs us, that the Romans who desired philomathic

⁶⁷ 'The slight modifications observed on comparing it with the language of the Troubadours receive explanations which become new proofs of its identity.' Rayn. p. 141.

⁶⁸ Raimond Vidal, the Troubadour, remarks, 'There is no language natural or polite, but the Limousin.'—G. Scuol. Comment. v. 5. p. 18. There are two ancient Provençal grammars still remaining in MS.; one is called 'The Donat. Provençal,' the other is by this Raimond Vidal. In this he says, 'As I have seen but few who know the right manner *de trobar* (of composing poems), I have made this book to show which of the *Trobadors* have best trobat, and best taught to do so, that others may learn to follow the right mode of such compositions 'de trobar.' Rayn. v. 2. p. clii. He is conjectured to have been the son of Pierre Vidal. St. Pal. 3. p. 277.

⁶⁹ Zurita Ann. D'Arragon.

⁷⁰ Provenç. MS. Rayn. v. 5. p. 19. His father married the heiress of Arragon.

⁷¹ Justin, l. 43. c. 3.

⁷² Cicero pro Flacco. His language is strong: of 'this emporium of letters and civilization,' he exclaims, 'I might justly say that its disciplinam et gravitatem may be preferred, not only to Greece, but to all nations. It is so regulated in the study of the best things, that all its institutions may be easier framed than imitated.' Ib.

BOOK learning, went, not to Athens, but to Marseilles.⁷³

VIII.

STORY OF
ENGLISH
LITERATURE.

The remark of Varro, that "they used three languages, Greek, Latin, and Keltic,"⁷⁴ will perhaps conduct us near to the actual source of the Provençal language, as it is such a patois or mixture as the popular blending of these three tongues would produce. In the sixth century of the Christian era, their improvement and celebrity had declined.⁷⁵ The Bagaudæ had destroyed the schools in these regions in the time of Dioclesian;⁷⁶ and manners are always deteriorated when knowledge departs.

That their influence pervaded and benefited all the Troubadour provinces, we may infer from the assertion of St. Jerom, that in his time "all Aquitania chiefly boasts itself to be of Grecian origin."⁷⁷ Under the Roman government, Toulouse had a very celebrated temple to Minerva, splendid with its gilded roof,⁷⁸ and also a reputable school of rhetoric.⁷⁹ It was praised for its cultivation of the arts, and became the seat of the Gothic government, whose sovereign Theodoric patronised letters.⁸⁰ Its floral games,

⁷³ Strabo, l. 4. Tacitus mentions that Agricola studied there, and describes it as a place, 'Græca comitate et Provincium parsimonia mixtum, beneque compositum.'—Vit. Ag.

⁷⁴ Varro in Isidorus, l. 15. c. 1. Bulæus has given 30 instances of common French words derived from the Greek.—Hist. Ac. Par. p. 23. The resemblance is exact.

⁷⁵ Agathias, in 540, remarks, that they had much departed from their ancient institutions.

⁷⁶ Aurel. Vict.

⁷⁷ Jerom de Illust. Doct. and Ep. 2. ad Galatas.—Bulæus, Hist. Acad. Par. p. 55.

⁷⁸ Strabo, l. 4. notices it as a temple of great sanctity, revered by its neighbours, magna veneratione, and abounding with their gifts.

⁷⁹ Ausonius mentions the 'docta toga of the Palladiæ Tolosæ,' and that Sedatus a rhetor taught there. This has been verified by Æl. Vinetus, who found his tombstone, with his name on it, and the effigy of a man, 'capillo et barba crispa, holding a book in his hand, placed on his breast.'—Bulæus, p. 41.

⁸⁰ Sidonius Ap. mentions this; and that, on the exhortation of Avitus, 'Theodoric learnt the Roman laws, and was instructed in the good arts of Toulouse.' Ib. In 496, Theodoric wrote to Ludwin, or Louia, king of

and their prizes for the best poetry on the first of every May, are recorded in the fourteenth century,⁸¹ and appear to have been derived from some more ancient original.⁸² These facts are sufficient to prove a more than usual degree of intellectual cultivation, and of literary taste and studies, in these parts.

CHAP.
III.

POETRY OF
THE TROU-
BADOURS.

When the Franks expelled the Romans, their sovereigns subjected Aquitania to a feudal submission, but it continued under its own duke with all its local peculiarities. When the Arabs had overwhelmed Spain, they soon passed over the Pyrennees, and attempted to reduce Aquitania to their faith and empire, but were repulsed by its Christian ruler.⁸³ His success induced him to overrate his power, and to refuse homage to Charles Martel, who claimed it. This roused the Frankish general to attack him, and finding his inferiority, he preferred baseness

the Franks, 'We have sent you a citharedum (or Jongleur) skilful in his art, who will delight you both by his countenance and hands, and singing with a consonant voice.' Cassiod. v. 1. p. 64.

⁸¹ In 1323 and 1355, the chief prize was a violet flower of fine gold, which afterwards lessened into a silver one. The two others were a silversunflower. In 1324, the laws of the subject, called *La Gaye Science*, directed the candidates to recite their poems on May-day after mass, and committed their examination to seven judges. Bulæus, *Hist. Ad.*

⁸² This is inferred, not unreasonably, from Justin having mentioned floral games at Marseilles, l. 43. c. 3. The period of their institution at Thoulouse cannot now be ascertained. Its inhabitants referred them to a virgin lady, Clementia Isaut. The inscription on her statue there imported that she had made a public market-place at her own expense, and bequeathed it to the people of that city, on condition that they should every year celebrate the *ludos florales* in the public edifice she had built, and place roses on her monument, and feast around it. Bulæus, p. 42.

⁸³ In 717, Alhaur made the first Mohamedan irruption into Narbonnese Gaul, whence he carried away much booty, and many of the inhabitants to be slaves. In 721, Alsama ben Melu again passed the Pyrennees, took Carcason, and besieged Toulouse. Marles' *Abridg. of Condé Hist. Arab.* 1. p. 118-124; but Eudo, the duke of Aquitania, then drove them back. *Annales Laur. and Ann. Nazarini*, p. 24, and *Ann. Petav.* p. 7. They made some predatory incursions afterwards. *M. Condé*, p. 129. On Ambisa's expedition; see *M. Coudé*, p. 130, and *Chron. Moissiac*, p. 290.

BOOK
VIII.HISTORY OF
ENGLISH
POETRY.

to submission, and called the new Arab governor of Spain to his assistance, who came but only to perish under the Frankish sword.⁸⁴ His successor, the able Abderrahman, prepared a mighty army of zealous Mussulmen to subdue the defying kingdom of the Franks. But when he invaded, the new duke of Aquitania had made his peace with Charles Martel, and their united forces fought that great battle in 732, between Tours and Poitiers, whose decisive issue rescued Europe from the prevalence of the Islam imposture. The Saracen commander, and the largest part of his army, were destroyed;⁸⁵ and when another Arab chieftain endeavored to retrieve the disaster, he met the same fate.⁸⁶ The Saracens were afterwards so active and persevering, as to keep for some time several towns on the frontiers and sea coast of Provence and Gascony, while Pepin reduced the whole region to a more complete subjection to the Frankish government as its chief lord.⁸⁷ But his son Charlemagne, amid his other extensive conquests, repeatedly directed his armies over the Pyrennees.⁸⁸ Tho

⁸⁴ The Ann. Laurensenses Minores mention the invitation, and state that the Saracens had reached Bourdeaux when Charles attacked and defeated them. p. 114.

⁸⁵ In 728, Eudo, the former duke of Aquitania, died; and in 730 the Saracens entered France, and took Avignon. Ann. Laur. 114. They stormed Bourdeaux, and besieged Tours. M. Condé, p. 139-141. In October 732, Charles obtained his important victory, (Ann. Petav. p. 9) and pursuing it, besieged those who escaped in Narbonne. Ann. Laur. 115.

⁸⁶ In 734. Ann. Laur. 115. In 738, the comte de Provence invited the Saracens to re-enter against the Franks, but the latter once more drove them back. Ib.; and see Annales Mettenses, 325. In 741, Charles Martel, or the Hammer, so called from his redoubtable blows and victories, died. Ann. Petav. 10.

⁸⁷ The son of Eudo refusing, like his father, homage and fealty to Pepin as the Frankish sovereign, the latter three times invaded Aquitania, in 760, 1, 2, conquering to Bourges, Theuars, and Limoges. Ann. Laur. and Einhardi, 142, 143.

⁸⁸ As the transactions of Charlemagne with the Saracens in Spain are not much known, and have not been correctly stated, a brief notice of

suffering in one part of his army as he returned from the victorious expedition which he had personally led;⁸⁰ yet the general result of his repeated operations against the Mussulmen was, that before his death he had extended his conquests, or his substantial dominion, from the mountains to the Ebro.⁸¹ But altho as the Franks and Saracens alternately prevailed in these regions, many effects must have resulted from their presence; yet the native chiefs retained or recovered their castles and possessions as the invading currents

CHAP.
III

POETRY OF
THE FRANK-
SARACENS.

them may be useful. In 777, after the successful Abderrahman had defeated all the Moor and Arab chiefs who had opposed him, one of them, named Ibn-alarbi, invited Charlemagne to befriend them. On this solicitation he came from Saxony, held his Easter feast in Aquitaine, and in 778 led a powerful army over the Pyrennees. He took and levelled the walls of Pamplona, and penetrated to Saragossa, which was delivered to him, and taking hostages from its principal men, he returned to France. Poeta Saxo, p. 234. and Chron. Moiss. p. 296, which calls the Arab friend Taurus. In 793, when Charlemagne was engaged with the Avari on the Danube, Hixim, who had succeeded to his father's throne instead of his elder brothers, invaded Provence, plundered to Narbonne, and attacked Carasson, defeating William the count of Poitou. Chr. Moiss. p. 300. In 796, Zatuna, Saracen chief in Barcelona, came to the emperor at Aix-la-Chapelle, and made to him a surrender of that city, where Abdalla, the brother of Hixim, who had been driven out of Spain, also came to implore succor. Annal. Laur. p. 182. Einh. Ann. p. 183. The next year Charlemagne sent his son Louis, then king of Aquitania, into Catalonia, with Abdalla. Louis received the submission of Barcelona, and besieged Huesca. Poeta Saxo, p. 253. Three years afterwards, the Saracen prefect of this city sent the emperor its keys. Einh. 187. Poet. S. 257. In 801, Zatun revolting from the Frankish government, Charlemagne sent his son Louis to besiege it; and after two years operations it was taken, and finally annexed to the Frankish crown. Einh. 223. Chron. Moiss. 307. In 809, Louis was again in Spain with an army, and besieged Tortosa on the Ebro, but returned without taking it; Einh. 196; and in 812, just before his death, the Arab sovereign solicited and obtained a peace for three years. Ch. Moiss. p. 310. There is a precision in these notices, to which the looser statements of the Arabian accounts, collected by M. Condé, must be subjected.

⁸⁰ After the main body had passed safely, the treacherous Gascons surprised and cut off his rear guard amid the mountains. This attack was the celebrated battle of Roncevalles, where the romance-famed Roland fell. The Poeta Saxo remarks, that here some 'Palatini ministri' perished. p. 234. This occurred on his return in 778.

⁸¹ Poeta Saxo, p. 270. In 827, Abumazar led an army against Barcelona and Gercona, but only ravaged the country and returned. Einh. 216. And the next year Hlothaire retaliated by a Frankish invasion. Ib. 217.

BOOK
VIII.HISTORY OF
ENGLISH
POETRY.

retired: and neither had that lasting influence in these parts as to justify our ascribing to them the primitive origin of Provençal poetry.⁹¹

The invasion of Attila and his Huns seems to have made a stronger impression on the Aquitanian imagination, as there is a Latin poem still existing connected with their country, which may be placed in the beginning of the eighth century.⁹² This is the earliest indication we have of any Provençal composition, tho the form in which it has survived to us is not in the vernacular tongue; but from its being devoted to an Aquitanian king and hero, we may safely ascribe it to an Aquitanian author.⁹³

This evidence of the direction of the Provençal mind to fictitious composition, which the age of the Bavarian MS. prevents us from dating later than the

⁹¹ The Mussulmen were at last expelled from Narbonne, after a siege of six years, in 759; M. Condé; but except Alhakem's invasion of Narbonne-Gaul again in 797, and its imitation by Abderahman, in 812, which were but temporary effects, the troops of the Crescent were seen in France no more. In 843 and 860 the Normans began to attack them. The Asturian kingdom arose also in power; Navarre became a Christian state; Galicia revolted; Castile began to emerge; and their own civil dissensions likewise increasing, they found too much employment in Spain itself to attempt any further molestations on the French side of the Pyrennees.

⁹² It was printed by Fischer in 1780, under the title of '*De prima Expeditione Attalæ, Regis Hunnorum in Gallias, ac de Rebus Gestis Waltheri, Aquitanorum principis, Carmen epicum Seculæ VI.*' From a MS. of the 13th century. The *Chronica de Novalise*, compiled about 1060, quotes it; and it exists in a MS. at Carlsruhe, which appears to be of the ninth century: Fischer refers it to the sixth. Abate Ciampi, in his life of Cino, thinks it not anterior to the ninth; and Mr. Weber, taking a middle path, suggests the time of king Pepin, as its probable date. *Illust. North. Ant.* p. 25. This would place it in the middle of the eighth century. I would prefer this opinion, as, from its subject, I think it was written before the Arab invasions.

⁹³ It describes the king of Aquitania as sending his son Walther, and the king of Burgundy his daughter Hilteguend, and the king of the Franks the youth Hagano, of Trojan descent, to Attila, for hostages. They are educated at his court. Walther flies from it with the princess. His adventures and exploits form the substance of the poem. He at last got safe to Aquitania, where he reigns in peace for thirty years. Mr. Weber has given a brief sketch of its contents, p. 23-5.

ninth century, and the probable fact, that the Latin epic is a translation of an Aquitanian romance or ballad, combine, with all the preceding circumstances, to dispose us not to look beyond its own country for the origin of its poetry. The ancient and continued Grecian cultivation of these regions, must have given improvements and superiority to that natural and primitive love and practice of song, which every nation, in some shape or other, appears, even in its most uncivilized state, to have possessed and cherished.⁹⁴

CHAP.
III.

POETRY OF
THE TROU-
BADOURS.

The cause of that peculiar direction of mind to the amatorial passion, which distinguished the loves and songs of the Troubadours, is a different question; and for this we are led, by the ancient authority which has most fully described to us their Cours d'Amour, to look to BRETAGNE, and to give it a Breton origin, as we have before suggested to be the case as to the romances about Arthur.⁹⁵ For Andreas, the chaplain, expressly refers the Code d'Amour of these courts to their Armorican source.⁹⁶

⁹⁴ Their superior lords and neighbors, the Franks, had this ancient poetry, for Charlemagne is mentioned by Eginhart to have 'written and committed to memory *barbara et antiquissima carmina*, in which the actions and wars of the ancient kings were sung.' Vit. Car. As he does not confine these poems to the Franks, and as Charlemagne was frequently in Aquitania, its ballads may have been among those which the emperor copied and learnt.

⁹⁵ See our 4th volume, p. 233.

⁹⁶ His account is, that a Breton knight went alone into a forest to meet Arthur. He found a lady there, who said, 'I know what you are seeking for, but you will find it only with my help. You have solicited a Breton lady for love, and she exacts of you to bring a celebrated falcon which rests on a perch in the court of Artus. To obtain this falcon, you must prove, by the success of a combat, that this lady is handsomer than any of those loved by the knights who are in this court.' After many romantic adventures, the knight found a falcon on a golden perch at the entrance of the palace, and seized it. A little chain of gold hung down from the perch, with a written paper. This was the code amoureux, which the knight was to take and make known on the part of the King of Love, if he desired to carry away the falcon quietly. The author

BOOK
VIII.HISTORY OF
ENGLISH
POETRY.

The language of the Troubadours themselves also occasionally indicates to us, that they were very conversant with the Breton lays;⁹⁷ and with this remark we must leave the subject of the origin of the Provençal poetry, as no further elucidations can now be added.⁹⁸

adds, that this code having been presented to the Cour d'Amour, composed of a great number of knights and ladies, they all adopted the rules, and ordered them to be faithfully preserved for ever. All the persons who had been called to the court, or who had assisted at it, took this code with them, and caused it to be known, to those who cherished the passion, in various parts of the world. Raynouard, v. 2. p. ciii.

⁹⁷ Thus Folquet de Marseilles sings :—

I would not that any man should hear
The sweet songs of the birds;
But he who has been in love.
What is there that delight me
Like the bird over the meadow,
And the beauty which I prefer?
This pleases me more than the songs
And voltas and lays of Brittany.—Rayn. v. 3. p. 155.

But on the existence and great popularity of the Breton lays in the twelfth century, I have noticed several facts and authorities in the later editions of my 'Vindication of the Ancient British Bards,' printed now at the end of the third volume of the Anglo-Saxon History. See vol. 3. p. 571, 2. fifth edition.

⁹⁸ I cannot concur with those who would derive the Provençal poetry from Catalonia and the Arabs. There is no Catalan poem known, which is so old as the nine troubadour pieces of the comte de Poitiers; and these gentlemen have not remarked that Catalonia was not the ancient name of the Spanish province which now bears it. The most ancient Catalonia was the name of a territory near Toulouse. Mariana has mentioned this, and states that the Gothic king Theodore compelled the invaders who were besieging Orleans, to retire to the Catalaunean plains near Toulouse. Hist. Ep. l. 5. c. 3. The same Spanish historian, cavassing and rejecting other theories, refers the origin of the Catalonians in Spain, to the 'Catalaunii, a people widely diffused in Narbonensian Gaul, up to the city of Toulouse, who emigrated and penetrated into Spain, and there obtained a new home and settlement.' Ib. l. 7. c. 11. So Hieron. Paulus; tho he notices that some refer the Catalons to Angarius, surnamed Catalon, who led an army of Germans into the Spanish province to expel the Arabs, and who called his soldiers Catalani; yet adds that other authors state that they were not Germans, whom this adventurer commanded, but that they were of the Gallic nation, and came from the Catalaunean district in Gaul. Hisp. Illust. v. 2. p. 842. M. Marles the translator of Condé, places this migration in the times of Charles the Bald, and states that there is yet not far from Toulouse a bourgade called Catalens. Marles' Condé, v. 2. p. 31. So that instead of the Troubadour poetry originating from Spanish Catalonia, the Catalonians themselves are a colony of the Provençals.

CHAP. IV.

POEMS OF JOHN GOWER.

WE now approach the men who first gave our poetry permanent beauty and form. The authors hitherto noticed were but the heralds that better things were possible, and excited the taste for their attainment. Yet, however uncouth their garb, or dull their endless rimes and metre, Layamon, Gloucester, Brunne, Hampole, Barbour, the romancers, and Piers Ploughman, were still the messengers of a new power of intellect to the British nation, which their posterity were not slow to cultivate. A general activity and improvement of mind seem to have actuated Europe during the thirteenth century; and the effects were peculiarly visible in Italy, and in her literature, as much as in her civil transactions. The Provençal Troubadours, who first nurtured the fancy of her people, gave way to a new race of native Italian poets, apparently beginning in Sicily, but soon pervading and animating all the peninsula. At the end of the thirteenth, and during the progress of the fourteenth century, Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio, suddenly appeared with superior genius, with cultivated taste, and classical compositions. These men not only illuminated the countries where they were born or lived, but operated, by the diffusion of their works, to increase the intellectual light of nations more remote. It is with some regret that we read Petrarch complaining, that an English statesman, a

CHAP
IV.

BOOK
VIII.HISTORY OF
ENGLISH
POETRY.

minister of Edward III. neglected his letters.¹ But a statesman with a taste for literature or the arts is a confessed phenomenon. Mecænas would lose his proverbial fame if it were not so; and Petrarch's acquaintance with the busy world, ought to have diminished his surprise, if not his satire. More congenial minds, however, existed in England, who felt the merits of the Italian genius, and eagerly studied its effusions. That Chaucer profited from the Provençal poetry to adorn and enrich his English compositions, we have the judgment and authority of Dryden to believe;² and they who study attentively the spirit and poems of Gower, Chaucer, Lydgate, and their successors, will see many reasons for believing that, from the study of the Troubadour works in the first instance, and of their Italian and Spanish scholars

¹ As it has been usually stated that Petrarch was in familiar correspondence with this English chancellor in England, on the authority of the letter which I am going to cite, tho it really disproves the fact, I will translate it at length: it is addressed to Thomæ Messanensi. He is speaking of the various opinions of the Isle of Thule:—'I had much conversation on this subject with Richard, formerly the chancellor of the king of England; a man of ardent mind, and not ignorant of letters. Having been born and educated in Britain, and from his youth unusually curious after subjects little known, he seemed to me to be peculiarly fit to elucidate questions of this sort. But whether he was ashamed to confess his ignorance to me, as many now are who are not aware how much credit it does their modesty (since no one is bound to know all things) to own frankly their ignorance of what they do not know; or whether, which I will not suspect, that he envied me the knowledge of the subject; or whether he expressed his real feelings; he answered that he would certainly satisfy me, but not till he returned to his books in his own country, of which no man had a more abundant supply. He was then, when I fell into his acquaintance, at the apostolical seat (at Avignon) negotiating the affairs of his master. It was at that juncture, when those first seeds of war were growing between his sovereign and the king of France, which have since produced such a bloody harvest, and of which the sickles have not yet been laid aside, nor the barns closed. But after my promiser went away, whether he found nothing, or became distracted by the heavy duties of his episcopal office newly imposed, yet he *never* satisfied my wishes, *altho often urged by my letters*, otherwise than *by an obstinate silence*. So Thule never became more known to me for my British friendship.' Petrarch, Epist. famil. l. 3. p. 34. ed. Venice, 1492.

² He expresses this opinion in the preface to his Fables.

and imitators afterwards, all the subsequent love poetry which fills the volumes of our English Parnassus to the end of the reign of Elizabeth, has principally originated.

CHAR
IV.

POEMS OF
JOHN
GOWER.

The chivalric love poetry was the peculiar offspring of the middle ages,³ and may justly claim the Troubadours as its original parents. From them it descended to Cino, Guittone, and Dante; but assumed its purest and most intellectual form in Petrarch, from whom it has also been called the Petrarchian love.⁴ The Troubadours, notwithstanding the immorality of their final object, cultivated also its imaginative and mental sensibility. They made it a rich enjoyment of abstract feeling, distinct from that of the common gratification, however ultimately combined with it; and their universal popularity during the period of their prevalence, made all the cultivated minds of Europe cherish, talk, and write upon it, as an intellectual passion, whose emotions exalted at times to verbal veneration the object of their attention, and whose delicacies were studied and enforced as assiduously as their successful result was pursued and contended for.⁵ The Italian genius slowly imbibed from them both the spirit of emulation

³ Zanotti justly remarks, that Petrarch was not the first to discover the form of this noble love; but that it was unknown to the Greeks and Latins. *Arte Poet. Rag.* 5.

⁴ Abate Ciampi's *Life of Cino*, p. 165. 'Pontaninus shows, on the authority of Brunetti, that the popular language of the Provençaux was, in 1260, la piu dilettevole e la piu commune of all others.' Muratori, *Ant. Ital.* p. 704.

⁵ 'Our Tuscans, not less than the rest of Italy, and indeed all the rest of Europe, were in those times admirers of the Provençals, to whose poetry the preference was given, not only in the courts of the great, but in every place where taste and gentility were valued. No where were the praises of honorable love, nor the amenity and simplicity of rural life, sung with so much applause and beauty, as by the Provençals.' Ciampi, p. 79.

BOOK
VIII.HISTORY OF
ENGLISH
POETRY.

and the necessary tuition.⁶ But a Cino, Guittone, and Petrarch, gradually arose in Italy to give birth to a new poetry in that country, and to excite other nations to a similar fertility.⁷ These writers, and especially the latter, separated the cultivated sensibility of the Provençals⁸ from all the grossness at which it aimed: and poetry became then the companion and the language of honorable love, of purer affection, and of the noblest feelings of the attracted heart. In England, the new spirit and genius burst forth in Gower and Chaucer, and afterwards in Surrey, Wyatt, and Gascoigne; and has produced unto us such an overabundant harvest in its most laudable form, that its best productions have sunk into oblivion or indifference, from our repletion and satiety. But as it pervaded our Gower, Chaucer, and Lydgate, it animated them to new forms and subjects of poetical composition. These venerated founders of our real Parnassus discover in several passages of their works that they were benefited from

⁶ 'But not having then an uniform and polished language, altho they took from the Provençals, metres, rimes, arguments and certain beautiful and graceful ideas, yet with their unequal and imperfect diction, they composed rather a jargon, than even a middling poetry.' Ciampi, 80.

⁷ Cino was born in 1270, and was at Toulouse long enough to be familiar with the Provençal language and poetry. Ciampi says of him, 'No one before Cino knew how to take away from Italian versification its rudeness, roughness and obscurity: to substitute the softness of vowels, beautiful metaphors, easy and natural, without entangled periods and far-fetched figures; and to make it flowing, interesting, and clear. Bembo, as well as Dante and Petrarch, has acknowledged Cino to be the best master of language and poetry.' p. 82, 3.

⁸ M. Raynouard has selected and translated a great number of passages from the poems of the Troubadours, which express 'les sentimens tendres et affectueux de ces amants passionnés et timides; les vœux, les craintes, la soumission; les esperances et la connoissance de l'amour. On verra l'expression d'une tendresse toujours vive et fidele, souvent ingenieuse d'une franchise delicate; d'une resignation touchante; enfin tout ce qui constitue et distingue le caractere, delez passion chevaleresque.' vol. 2. v-li.

this source.⁹ To them our attention must now be turned.

CHAP.
IV.

Gower and Chaucer were contemporaries, and for some time friends, and notice each other in their works with affectionate commendation. But Gower was born¹⁰ before Chaucer, and seems to have survived him. The oldest writers who mention both, usually place Gower first; and Fox, after mentioning Chaucer, says that Gower was a great deale his ancient.¹¹ That Gower was in established fame when Chaucer published the work that has been deemed one of his earliest, the *Troilus*, may be presumed from its dedicating expressions. The intimation of Leland, that he was descended from the Gowers of Stittenham, in Yorkshire, seems to be confirmed by the deed dated at that place, on which his name is

POEMS OF
JOHN
GOWER.

Gower.

⁹ Gower mentions an anecdote of Dante in his 7th book, p. 222.

Chaucer tells the famous story of Ugolino, from Dante, and calls him 'the grete poete of Itaille.' *Monkes Tale*, p. 126. Chal. ed. He inserts a song, which appears to be a translation of one of Petrarch's sonnets, in his *Troilus*; and Mr. Tyrwhit and Mr. Warton have remarked, that Chaucer's *Palemon* and *Arcite* was taken from Boccaccio's *Theside*. Mr. Tyrwhit believes that the *Troilus* and *Cressid* was taken from Boccaccio's *Filostrato*. Mr. Godwin repels this supposition; *Life Chauc.* vol. 1. p. 270; but I think not conclusively.

Lydgate thus mentions Petrarch:—

But O! alas! the retorikes suete
Of Petrak fraunceys that so coude endite.

MS. Harl. 629.

¹⁰ The deed which Mr. Todd, in his *Illustrations*, remarks that Gower witnessed, is dated 1346. If we suppose him to have then been 18, it will place his birth about 1328. And on this computation he would be 80 when he died. I am not inclined to place him earlier.

¹¹ See Mr. Todd's *Illustrations*, *Introd.* pp. xxvi-xxxii. John the Chaplain mentions Chaucer first. Todd, xxxi. But as this author finished his metrical translation in 1410, and Gower did not die till the latter part of 1408, it is probable that he wrote the passage on both while Gower was alive, and therefore naturally mentioned Chaucer first. The different tenses of the verbs he uses, seem to me to imply that the one was dead and the other living.

To Chawcer that was flour of rhetoryk—
And Gower that craftily dooth trete.

BOOK
VIII.HISTORY OF
ENGLISH
POETRY.

endorsed as a witness.¹² He lived to become old, blind and infirm.¹³ In 1400, he penned expressions which imply that he thought he was near death;¹⁴ but he survived till 1408.¹⁵ His will proves that poverty was not among the evils that he was suffering.

His first poems were the fifty Sonnets in French, which frequently exhibit much softness and even elegance.¹⁶ His *Vox Clamantis* and *Metrical Chro-*

¹² Todd's *Illust.* pp. 91, 92. Very little is known of Gower's life. Leland calls him, '*Vir equestris ordinis*,' and adds, that he both studied and practised law. *De Scrip. Brit.* 414. That he was in London at the time of Wat Tyler's insurrection, has been already mentioned. His being a lawyer will account for his flight and trepidation, mentioned before, vi. 2. p. 262.

¹³ After mentioning of himself, that having written the *Vox Clamantis* and the *Chronica Tripartita*, to the second year of Henry IV. or 1400, he adds, 'and now because in many ways depressed by the weight of old age and other infirmities, I am unable to write chronicles any further,' &c.—also, 'It was the second year of king Henry that I cease to write, because I am blind.' *MS. Tib. A 4.*

¹⁴ 'Having written on the vanities of the world, I am about to leave the world. In my last verse I write that I am dying. Let him that comes after me write more discreetly than I have done, for now my hand and pen are silencing. I can do nothing of any value now with my hands. The labor of prayers is all that I can bear. I pray then with my tears, living, but blind. O God! protect the future reigns which thou hast established, and give me to share thy holy light.' *MS. Cot. Lib. Tib. A 4.*

¹⁵ Mr. Todd has brought this fact to public notice by reprinting his Will, which Gough had inserted in his *Sepulchral Monuments*, but which had been overlooked, and by adding its probate. The Will is dated in 1408, and proved 24 October 1408, by his wife. See it in Todd, 87-90. It purports to have been made within the priory of 'St. Marie de Overes,' now St. Saviour's, in Southwark. It gives several legacies to the prior and convent; others to the hospitals of St. Thomas in Southwark, 'St. Thome Elsingspitell, Bedlem extra Byschopus-gat, and St. Mary Spittel,' near Westminster. To his wife he leaves 100*l.*, some plate, and the rents of the farms of *his manors* of Southwell in Nottinghamshire, and of Multon in Suffolk. *Ib.*

¹⁶ Mr. Todd has printed, more correctly than before, five of these balades, the 30th, 34th, 36th, 43d and 48th, in his *Illustrations*, pp. 102-108, from a *MS.* of the marquis of Stafford's, of which he says, 'By an entry on the first leaf, in the hand-writing and under the signature of Thomas lord Fairfax, Cromwell's general, an antiquary, and a lover and collector of curious manuscripts, it appears that this book was presented by the poet Gower, about the year 1400, to Henry the Fourth; and that it was given by lord Fairfax to his friend and kinsman sir Thomas Gower, knight and baronet, in the year 1656.' It appears also to 'have been in the hands of King Henry the Seventh, while earl of Richmond, from

nicle, both in Latin, have been already noticed.¹⁷ The poem which has ranked him among the fathers of English poetry is the *Confessio Amantis*; it contains nearly 35,000 lines. He wrote it by the desire of Richard II.¹⁸ But it is not clear at what time he composed it, excepting that he began it after this king's accession, and had finished it before the sixteenth year of his reign,¹⁹ or between 1377 and 1393.

The merit of Gower stood high in the estimation of our ancestors. He has been characterized as wise, impressive, and almost sublime in his ethical character, but of no estimation as a poet. It is certain that the apostrophe of Chaucer, "O moral Gower!" breathes a volume of praise which language can scarcely exalt, and which few poets have deserved.²⁰ But Gower is not merely the moralist; he is also the genuine poet. Chaucer was his superior; but of all the authors who attempted narrative poetry in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, Gower may claim

CHAP.
IV.

POEMS OF
JOHN
GOWER.

the name Rychemond inserted in another of the blank leaves at the beginning, and explained by this note, 'Liber Henrici septimi, tunc comitis Richmond, propria manuscript.' Todd, p. 96. Warton's *Hist. Poet.* v. i. p. 474.

¹⁷ See before, v. 2. p. 261.

¹⁸ *Ib.* v. 2. p. 274.

¹⁹ From the printed lines of his Prologue it is inferred that he wrote it in the sixteenth year of Richard II. But the original Prologue did not contain these lines; and the substitution of those, which mention the date, for the others, imply that it was at least begun, if not finished, much earlier. It is most probable that so large a poem occupied a considerable portion of his life, and that it was written and made public, at least to his friends, at different periods. Hence Chaucer may have known it before he wrote his *Troilus*. That we must not take his later dates or dedications as conclusive proofs of the time of the composition of this work, we may reason from his *Sonnets*, which, tho his first work, yet are addressed to Henry IV. by their Colophon, mentioned by Todd, p. 97.

²⁰ Chaucer says in his *Troilus*—

O moral Gower! this boke I direct
To thee, and the philosophical Stroode,
To vouchesafe, where nede is, to correcte
Of your benignetyes and zealess good.
Troilus, l. 1.

BOOK
VIII.HISTORY OF
ENGLISH
POETRY.

the seat nearest to his friend. The English poetry that preceded Gower, was either the religious, the chronicle, or the romance, as already described, or the amatorial song, perhaps borrowed from the Troubadours. Our native language was still wild and rude. Tho Brunne and Hampole had cleared away many weeds, and scattered a few simple flowers, it as yet contained no work worthy, as Leland expresses it, of an elegant reader.²¹ Gower aspired to make one in obedience to his sovereign's command, and for his sake.²² He formed the plan of writing a poem which he thought new, that should live to future ages;²³ and blend instruction with entertainment,²⁴ that should be wisdom to the wise, and plea-

²¹ Leland, who was, from his nearness to Gower's times, a better judge of the point than we are, says of Gower, 'That he was of all, the first polisher of his paternal tongue. For before his age the English language lay uncultivated, and almost entirely rude. Nor was there any one who had written any work in the vernacular tongue, worthy of an elegant reader. Therefore he thought it worth his while to apply a diligent culture, that thus the rude herbs being extirpated, the soft violet and the purple narcissus might grow instead of the thistle and thorns.' Leland de Script. p. 415. Skelton, poet laureat at Oxford, about 1489, expresses a similar opinion:—'I saw Gower, that *first* garnished our English the rude.' Crowne of Laurell, p. 240.

²² In our englishe I think make
A boke for Kyng Richardes sake.
Gower's 1st Prol.

He hath this charge upon me leyde,
Some new thing I should boke
That he hymselfe it might loke.—Ib.

²³ For thy goodis, that we also—
Do write of newe some mattere.
Ensampled of the olde wise,
So that it might be in suche a wise,
Whan we be deade, and els where,
Beleve to the worldes ere.—Gower, Prol. p. 7.

²⁴ Who that all of wisdom write
It dulleth ofte a mans witte,
To hym that shall it all daie rede.
For thilke cause—
I wyll go the middell wey,
And write a boke bytwene the twey.—Ib.

sure to the gay.²⁵ This design, of uniting the minstrel with the philosopher, was highly beneficial to the British public in those days, when few wrote in English,²⁶ and when the national intellect had made but little progress in thinking morally on life, beyond the precincts of the cloister. Tho sickness distressed him,²⁷ he pursued, and has accomplished the task which he proposed to himself, of reviewing the changing manners of the world,²⁸ and treating on its virtues and vices.²⁹ With many a pleasing tale, and with others, dull to us, but gratifying to our ancestors, he has interwoven a body of reflections on life, ethics, and knowlege, which English literature had not possessed before. He enlarged and disciplined the intellect and taste of his countrymen; and if his works have ceased to be either necessary or interesting, it is because they have powerfully assisted to create that superiority of mind, which, honoring its ancient teachers with verbal respect, neither resorts to them for pleasure, nor condescends to study their obsolete lessons.³⁰

CHAP
IV.

POEMS OF
JOHN
GOWER.

²⁵ To make a boke after his herte—
Which maie be wisdom to the wise,
And plaie to hem that list to plaie.—Ib.

²⁶ So Gower remarks—
And for that few men endite
In our Engliſshe.—Prol. p. 7.

I should rather infer from this passage, that Chaucer had not written much at the time this sentence was penned. If he had attained any celebrity, Gower would have hardly claimed such a merit for writing in English.

²⁷ Though I sicknesse have upon honde
And longe have had.—Ib.

²⁸ I thynke for to touche also
The worlde, whiche neweth every daie,
So as I can; so as I maie.—Ib.

²⁹ And in this wise I thynke to treate—
Betwene the vertue and the vice.—Ib. p. 8.

³⁰ Besides Leland, who says that Gower's works were in his time read studiously by the learned, p. 415, we have two writers in the sixteenth

BOOK
VIII.HISTORY OF
ENGLISH
POETRY.

The form into which he has chosen to arrange his thoughts and his stories was certainly peculiar. He goes out into the woods, "not for to synge with the birdes," but to muse despondingly on love; and the king and queen of love there appear to him. Cupid, "with eyen wrothe," sends thro his heart "a fyry dart." But Venus is desirous to console him. She wishes, however, first to ascertain the merit of her votary, whether he be "a faitour," a deceiver or not; and she calls upon Genius, "O Genius, mine owne clerke," to come forth and examine him, as his confessor. Their dialogue constitutes the poem.

To us this plan for an ethical poem appears sufficiently whimsical. But in the mind of Gower it had a propriety and a consistency which we shall scarcely feel. He lived at the period in which the refined spirit of chivalric gallantry had attained its highest polish. Love was, in the estimation of the age, the perfection of human excellence, and the worthiest object of human life. Gower felt with his age, but tried to make that feeling to be accompanied by every virtue and knowlege, and freed from every vice. To use his own words—

Suche love is goodly for to have;
 Suche love maie the body save;
 Suche love maie the sowle amende;
 The High God such love us sende

century, who express their sense of this old poet's merit and use. One, Caxton, in his dedication of the *Confessio* to Henry VIII. says of it—'It is plentifully stuffed and furnished with manifolde eloquent reasons, sharpe and quicke argumentes, and examples of great auctoritee, perswadyng unto vertue, not onely taken out of the poetes, oratours, historie writers and philosophers, but also out of the Holy Scripture.' The other is the author of the *Dialogue* printed 1573: 'And nere them satte old moral Goore with pleasaunte penne inhande, commendying honeste love without luste, and pleasure without pride, holinesse in the cleargie without hypocrisie, no tyrannie in rulers, no falshode in lawiers, no usurie in marchauntes, no rebellion in the commons, and unitie among kyngdoms.' Todd's *Introd.* p. xxix.

Forthwith; the remenaunt of grace.
 So that above in thilke place,
 Where resteth love and all pees,
 Our joye maie be endeless.²¹

CHAP.
 IV.

POEMS OF
 JOHN
 GOWER.

The lover, therefore, in the mind of Gower, was to be the Sir Charles Grandison of human life; that image of ideal excellence which it is the lot of genius and philanthropy so frequently to contemplate, so rarely to attain. Therefore, as Cicero required his perfect orator to possess all human knowlege, so Gower taught his lover to attain whatever was valuable both in virtue and intellect. To ascertain whether the lover he personates was of this description, whether he loved "in good manere,"²² and to assist him in his moral and mental progression, the deputed priest of Venus pursues his examination. He begins with the errors of the two chief senses, the sight and the hearing; and he questions him, whether he has offended with them. He proceeds to the vices, beginning with hypocrisy, and asks him—

'If thou arte of his companie;
 Tell forth, my sonne, and shrive thee cleane.'—p. 21.

His plan usually is for Genius to describe the vice or the virtue which he means to illustrate; to tell some interesting tale about it; to inquire if his hearer has practised it, and to instruct him by some moral or prudential admonition, to avoid the evil and pursue the good. He requires him to add knowlege to his virtue; and therefore treats on chemistry, and the other studies and sciences then pursued.

The poem of Gower has been more criticised than

²¹ Gower's Confess. l. 8. p. 274. Chalmers' ed.

²² Lo thus, my sonne! might thou lere
 What is to love in good manere,
 And what to love in other wise.—Ib. p. 265.

BOOK
VIII.HISTORY OF
ENGLISH
POETRY.

read, and from its neglect has, unfortunately for his fame, been much underrated. It has been judged by the form into which he has arranged it, rather than by its actual contents. It is not fair to describe it as an absurd dialogue between a lover and a priest of Venus. Its proper character is a didactic and ethical poem, built on that little allegory, and illustrated by appropriate tales. Some of these tales are very interesting; as his Paulina,³³ his Florent,³⁴ his Kyng of Lumbardie,³⁵ his Kyng of Hungarie,³⁶ his King that "was whilom young and wise,"³⁷ his tales of Constance, Canace, and Pygmalion,³⁸ his Crassus, and his Nectanebus.³⁹ Many of his stories are unfortunately taken from that abyss of dulness, ancient mythology, and therefore have that petrifying effect upon his powers which every modern poet has experienced, who has taken his subjects from the themes of his school-exercises.

That Gower had the talent of a poet in no common degree, in a rude time, when genuine poesy had yet scarcely even appeared in the English language, he shews by his numerous effusions on his leading subject, love. His soul seems to have been completely imbued with this passion in all its romantic feeling, and he expatiates upon it with a never-wearied enthusiasm. His feelings, on dancing with his mistress, are very lively pourtrayed—

For than I dare well undertake
That whan hir list on nightes wake
In chambre as to carole and daunce,
Methinke I maie more avance

³³ Gower's Confess. p. 23.³⁴ Ib. p. 18.³⁵ Ib. p. 26.³⁶ Ib. p. 32.³⁷ Ib. p. 41.³⁸ Ib. pp. 49. 73. 97.³⁹ Ib. pp. 139. 197. His account of Medea and Jason, book 5, is far superior to any of the Norman Trouveurs.

DURING THE MIDDLE AGES.

209

CHAP:
IV.

POEMS OF
JOHN
GOWER.

If I may gone upon hir honde,
Then if I wynde a kinges londe.
For whan I maie hir honde beclip
With suche gladnes I daunce and skip,
Methinketh I touche not the floore.
The ro whiche renneth on the moore
Is than nought so light as I.

He continues interestingly—

So mowe ye witten all for thy,
That for the tyme, slepe I hate:
And whan it falleth other gate
So that hir liketh not to daunce,
But on the dyes to cast a chaunce,
Or aske of love some demaunde,
Or els that hir list commaunde
To rede and here of Troilus;⁴⁰
Right as she wolde so, or thus
I am all redie to consent.
And if so is that I maie hent
Somytyme amonge a good leyser;
So as I dare, of my desire
I telle a part: But whan I praie,
Anone she biddeth me go my weye;
And seithe 'It is ferre in the night'—
And I swere 'It is even light.'
But as it falleth at laste
There may no worlde joye last—
How piteousliche on hir I looke
Whan that I shall my leve take
Hir ought of mercy for to slake."

His description of parting with his mistress is
natural, and described with true poetry:—

And than I bidde 'God hir see'
And so down knelende on my knee
I take leve; and if I shall,
I kisse hir and go forth withall.
And other while, if that I dore,
Ere I come fully at the dore

⁴⁰ This may be Chaucer's. ⁴¹ Gower's Confess, book 4. p. 116.

BOOK
VIII.HISTORY OF
ENGLISH
POETRY.

I tourne ayene and feigne a thyng,
 As tho I had lost a rynge,
 Or somewhat els, for I wolde
 Kisse her eftsoone if I shulde.
 But selden is that I so spede.
 And whan I see that I mote nede
 Depart—I depart—and than
 With all my herte I curse and banne,
 That ever slepe was made for eye.⁴²

Gower delights to indulge in these effusions. On another occasion, he says—

In every place, in every stede,
 What so my lady hath me bede,
 With all myn herte obedient,
 I have thereto been diligent.
 And if so is that she bid nought,
 What thyng that than into my thought
 Cometh first—if that I maie suffice
 I bowe and proffer my service,
 Somtyme in chamber, somtyme in hall,
 Right so as I see the tymes fall.
 And whan she goth to here masse—
 In aunter if I maie hir lede
 Unto the chapell and againe,
 Than is not all my wey in vayne.
 Somdele I maie the better fare,
 Whan I, that maie not fele hir bare,
 May lede hir clothed in myn arme.
 But afterwarde it doth me harme,
 Of pure imaginacion.
 For than this collacion,
 I make unto my selven ofte;
 And say—‘O Lorde how she is softe;
 How she is rounde; how she is small;
 Now wold God I had hir all.’⁴³

Nothing can more vividly display the feelings of love in all its romantic gallantry, than these lines:—

What thyng she byt me don, I do.
 And where she byt me gon, I go.

⁴² Gower's Confess. book 4. p. 116.

⁴³ Ib. p. 103.

And whan hir list to clepe, I come—
 I serve, I bowe, I loke, I lowte,
 Myn eie foloweth hir aboute;
 What so she woll, so woll I;
 When she woll sit, I knele by:
 And whan she stont, than woll I stonde:
 And whan she taketh hir werke on honde,
 Of wevyng or of embroudrie,
 Than can I not but muse and prie
 Upon hir fingers longe and smale.⁴⁴

His pictures breathe all the features of real life:—

And if it fall as for a tyme,
 Hir liketh nought abide by me,
 But busien hir on other thynges;
 Than make I other tarienges
 To drive forth the longe daie.
 For me is loth departe awaie.
 And than I am so symple of porte,
 That for to feigne some disporte
 I play with hir littell hounde,
 Nowe on the bed, now on the grounde.
 Nowe with the birdes in the cage.
 For there is none so litell page
 Ne yet so symple a chamberere
 That I ne make hem all chere.⁴⁵

Another picture may be added—

And if hir liste to riden oute
 On pilgremage, or other stede,
 I come, though I be not bede,
 And take hir in myne arm alofte
 And set hir in hir sadle softe,
 And so forth lede hir by the bridell,
 For that I wolde not ben ydell.
 And if hir list to ride in chare,
 And that I maie thereof beware,
 Anone I shape me to ride
 Right even by the chares side,
 And as I maie I speke amonge,
 And other while I synge a songe.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ Gower's Confess book 4. p. 103.

⁴⁵ Ib.

⁴⁶ Ib. p. 104.

BOOK
VIII.HISTORY OF
ENGLISH
POETRY.

There are many pleasing passages of this sort, which compel us to say that no English poet seems so truly to have felt, and so forcibly to have described, the passion of love in its true sentiment and chivalry, as our neglected Gower.


Sometimes he has a little touch of the Donne and Cowley witticisms. Thus, Genius having told the story of Medusa, asks him if he has ever misused his eyes? He answers—

Myn hert is growen into stone,
So that my lady thereupon
Hathe suche a printe of love grave
That I can nought my selfe save.⁴⁷

But these false fancies are rare. His stories are usually told in a plain and even style, but with much nature and unaffected feeling. He has not indeed the polished selection of thought which we now require; he does not usually in his descriptions seize upon the incident or the little features, which so often in Chaucer convey the narration to the heart; but he always gives the natural tho unadorned flow of a mind highly cultivated for his day, and sometimes he is interesting. Thus, in the shocking story of the princess Canace, who was led by unguarded familiarities into a great crime, and was delivered of a child. Her companion in the guilt fled, and her enraged father vowed to punish her vindictively:—

Betweene the wave of wode and wroth,
Into his daughters chambre he gothe,
And sie the childe that late was bore;
Whereof he hath his othe swore,
That she it shall full sore abie.
And she beganne mercy to crie
Upon hir bare knees, and praide,
And to hir father thus she saide—

⁴⁷ Gower's Confess. book 4. p. 21.

CHAP.
IV.POEMS OF
JOHN
GOWER.


' Have mercy ! Father !—Thynke I am
Thy childe—and of thy bloud I cam.
That I misdeed, youth it made ;
And in the flouddes bad me wade,
Where that I saw no perill tho.
But nowe it is befall so,
Mercy—my father ! do no wreche !'

And with that worde she loste speche ;
And fell downe swouned at his fote.⁴⁸

Her father will not forgive her, and sends her a sword to destroy herself with it. She promises to obey him ; and sits down to write her last letter to her seducer, whom she still loves :—

O thou my sorrow and my gladness !
O thou my hele and my sickness !
O thou my weale ; O thou my wo !
O thou my frende ! O thou my fo !
O thou my love ! O thou my hate !
For thee mote I be dead algate
Thilke ende maie I not asterte ;
And yet with all myn holle herte,
While that there lasteth me any breath
I woll thee love unto my death.
But of one thyng I shall the preie—
If that my litell sonne deie,
Let him be buried in my grave
Beside me - - - - -
In my right honde my penne I holde,
And in my lefte my swerde kepe ;
And in my barme ther lieth to wepe
Thy chylde and myn, which sobbeth fast.
Nowe am I come unto my last.
Farewell—for I shall soone die—
And thinke how I thy love abie.⁴⁹

Many touches of nature occur in his tales. Thus in his Constance : In consequence of a false accusation and forged orders, she was put into a ship with

⁴⁸ Gower's Confess. book 3. p. 74.⁴⁹ Ib.

BOOK her son, and left to the mercy of the waves.

VIII. poet thus describes it:—

HISTORY OF
ENGLISH
POETRY.

Upon the sea thei have hir brought :
But she the cause wist nought.
And thus upon the floode they wonne,
The lady with hir yonge sonne.
And then hir handes to the heven
She straught; and with a milde steven,
Knelend upon hir bare knee,
She saide, ‘ O high majostee
Whiche seest the point of every trouth,
Take of thy woful woman routh ;
And of this childe which I shall kepe.’
And with that worde she gan to wepe,
Swouned as deade and there she laie :
But he whiche all thynges maie,
Comforteth hir, and at laste
She loketh and hir eyen caste
Upon hir childe and saide this—
‘ Of me no maner charge it is
What sorowe I suffer, but of thee
Methinketh it is great pitee.
For if I sterve thou must deie.
So mote I nedes by the weie
For motherheed and for tenderness
With all my hole besynes,
Ordeine me for thilke office
As she whiche shall be thy norice,’
Thus was she strengthned for to stonde ;
And tho she took hir child in honde,
And gave it souke; and ever amonge
She wepte; and otherwhile songe
To rocke with hir childe aslepe.³⁰

He is very eloquent in describing the various
ings of love:—

Yes, Father ! oft it hath been so,
That when I am my lady fro,
And think she untoward draw,
Then cast I many a new law,

³⁰ Gower's Confess. book 2. p. 53. .

And all the world turn upside down,
And so record I my lesson,
And write in my memorial
What I to her tell shall.
But when I come where she is,
I have it all forgot, I wis.

Of that I thought for to tell,
I cannot then unnether spell—
So sore of her I am a dread.

For as a man that suddenly
A ghost beholdeth, so fare I;
So that, for fear, I cannot get
My wit, but I myself forget;
That I wote never what I am,
Nor whether I shall, nor when I cam.


But whan—in other place alone,
I make many a woeful moan

Unto myself, and speake so :

‘ A fool ! where was thine heart then,
When thou thy worthy lady see;
Wert thou afeard of her eie ? ’ p. 98.

He declares that he cannot forget either

- - - - her love or loath,
For over all wherear she goth,
Mine heart followeth her about;
Thus may I say withouten doubt,
For bet, for worse, for ought, for nought,
She passeth never from my thought;
But when I am there, as she is,
Mine heart, as I you said ere this,
Sometime of her is sore adrad,
And sometime is overglad;
All out of rule and out of space.
For when I saw her goodly face,
And think upon her high price,
As tho I were in Paradise,
I am so ravished of the sight,
That speak unto her I no might.
A tongue I have, and wordes none;
And thus I stand and think alone,

BOOK
VIII.HISTORY OF
ENGLISH
POETRY.


And stonde amazed and assoted,
That of no thing which I have noted
I cannot then a note sing,
But all is out of knowleging.
Thus, what for joy, and what for drede,
All is forgotten at need. p. 99.

When we read Gower, we incline to feel, that his happiest passages he has given us the origin specimens of those poetical tales, and of that style narration, and its connected feelings, which have much interested the public in *Lara*, the *Bride Abydos*, the *Corsair*, and the *Siege of Corinth*, as w as in the *Marmion*, and the similar productions our admirable intellectual Proteus—ever changin ever singing, and ever pleasing. With this impr sion, I may be allowed to adduce a few more : stances to illustrate its foundation :—

A king's son, the knight Iphis, fixed his love
Upon a maid of low estate ;
But tho he were a potentate
Of worldes good,—

His passion became so strong, tho she would r
return it—

That he exceedeth the measure
Of reason, that himself assure
He cannot, for the more he prayd,
The less love on him she laid.

Her indifference distressed and agitated him :—

He gave, he sent, he spake by mouth ;
But yet, for ought that ever he couth,
Unto his speed he found no way,
So that he cast his hope away.
Within his heart he gan despair
From day to day, and so empair,
That he hath lost all his delight
Of wish, of sleep, of appetite.

His emotions overpassed his reason, so that he
 cared not for life :—

CHAP.
 IV.
 —
 POEMS OF
 JOHN
 GOWER.

His death upon himself he sought,
 So that, by night, his way he nam,
 There wist none where he becam.
 The night was dark ; there shone no moon,
 Tofore the gates he came soon,
 Where that this young maid was,
 And with the woful word, ‘ Alas ! ’
 His deadly plaints he began,
 So still, that there was no man
 It heard. And then, he said thus :
 ‘ O thou Cupid ! O thou Venus !
 On you is ever that I cry,
 And you deigneth not to ply,
 Ne toward me your ear incline.
 Thus, for I see no medicine,
 To make an end of my quarrele,
 My death shall be instead of hele.
 Ah ! thou my woeful lady dear !
 Which dwellest with thy father here,
 And sleepest in thy bed at ease,
 Thou wotest nothing of my disease.
 What dreams hast thou now on hand ?
 Thou sleepest there ; and I here stand.
 Tho I no death from thee deserve,
 Here shall I for thy love sterve.
 Here shall I, a king’s son, die
 For love, and for no felonie.
 Whether thou thereof have joy or sorrow,
 Here shalt thou see me dead to-morrow.
 O hard heart ! aboven all !
 Then death which shall to me befall,
 For that thou would not do me grace,
 It shall be told in many place,
 That I am dead for love and truth.’

The desponding youth became so deranged, as to
 hang himself at her gate :—

The morrow came, the night is gone ;
 Men come out, and see anon

BOOK
VIII.HISTORY OF
ENGLISH
POETRY.

Where that this young lord was dead.
There was no house without rede,
For no man knew the cause why;
There was weeping; there was cry.

When the young lady heard of it, she regretted the event, and accused herself to every one as the cause, and became overwhelmed with grief:—

She weepeth, she crieth, she swooneth ofte;
She caste her eyen up alofte. p. 122.

She dies, and is changed into a statue.

There is a great fervor of moral feeling in his expression of his sympathies on marriage. He declares how ardent his attachment would be to a good will, how preferring, and how constant:—

If I that treasure might get,
It should never be forgot;
But I would it fast hold,
Till death us should depart in two.
For 'lieve it well, I love her so,
That even with mine own life,
If I that sweet lusty wife
Might once welden at my will,
For ever I would hold her still.
And in this wise take ye heep.
If I her had, I would her keep.
Fie on the bags in the chest!
I had enough, if her I kist;
For certes, if she were mine,
I had her lever than a mine
Of gold. For all this world's ryche
Ne might make me so rich,
As she that is so inly good;
I set nought of other good,
For might I get such a thing,
I had a treasure for a king. p. 124.

In his story of Midas, he relates, that Bacchus

promised to give the king of Phrygia any worldly good he should ask for:—

CHAP.
IV.

POEMS OF
JOHN
GOWER.

The king was glad, and still stood,
And was of his asking in doubt;
And all the world he casteth about,
What thing was best for his estate,
And with himself stood in debate
Upon three points, which I find
Ben levest unto man's kind:
The first of them, it is delight;
The two, ben worship and profite.

And than he thought, 'If that I crave
Delight, tho I delight may have,
Delight shall passen in my age,
That is no secure evantage;
For every joy bodily
Shall end in woe. Delight, for thy
Woll I not chuse; and if I worship
Ask, and of the world, lordship,
This is an occupation
Of proud imagination,
Which maketh an heart vain within.
This is no certainty to win,
For lord and knave, is all one way,
When they be born, and when they dey.

'And if I profit aske would,
I kno' not in what manner I should
Of world's goods have secureness,
For every thief upon richesse
Awaiteth for to rob and steal.'

He therefore declines these, and thinks it best,
when ever he desires it—

To get him gold withouten fail:
'The gold,' he saith, 'may lead an host;
The gold can make of hate love,
And war of peace, and right of wrong,
And long to short, and short to long.
Without gold may be no feast;
Gold is the lord of man and beast,

And may them both buy and sell;
So that a man may soothly tell
That all the world to gold obeyeth.

He therefore prays, that whatever he shall lay his
hand upon, may, at his touch, become gold.

Bacchus him granted, as he badde;
Then was this king of Phrygia gladde;
And for to put it in assay
With all the hast that he may,
He touchest that; he touches this;
And in his hand all gold it is.
The stone, the tree, the leaf, the grass,
The flower, the fruit, all gold it was.

Appetite made him at last desire his dinner:—

The cloth was laid, the board was set,
And all was forth tofore him set;
His dish, his cup, his drink, his meat:
But when he would or drink or eat,
Anon, as it his mouth came nigh,
It was all gold; and then he sigh,
Of avarice the folly.

Repenting of his power, he is ordered to wash in
the stream of Pactolus, to get rid of it. He did so,
and then returned home—

And put all avarice afar,
And the riches of gold despiseth;
And saith, that meat and cloth sufficeth.
And all this king set upon skill,
He bad his people for to till
Their land, and live under the law,
And that they should also forthdraw
Bestail, and seek no increase
Of gold, which is the breach of peace. p. 125.

A further instance of Gower's power of feeling,
as he makes his characters feel, and of expressing it,
may be quoted.

When Demophoon went to Troy, he had appointed
with queen Phillis a day for his return. The day

came, but he did not return; he did not remember
his appointment. CHAP. IV.

POEMS OF
JOHN
GOWER.

But now is pity for to wite,
As he did erst, so he forgate
His time eftsoon, and over sate:
But she, who could not do so,
The tide awaiteth evermo,
And cast her eye upon the sea:
Sometimes nay, sometime yea,
Sometime he came, sometime nought;
Thus she disputeth in her thought,
And wote not what she think may.
But fasting all the long day
She was, into the dark night;
And then she hath do set up light,
In a lantern on high aloft,
Upon a tower, where she goeth oft
In hope, that in his coming
He should see the light burning,
Whereof he might his ways right
To come. There she was, by night;
But all for nought. She was deceived;
For Venus hath her hope waved,
And shewed her upon the sky,
How that the day was fast by;
So that, within a little throw,
The daies light she might know.
Then she beheld the sea at large;
And when she saw there was no barge,
No ship, as far as she may ken,
Down from the tower she gan to ren,
Into an harbour, all her own,
Where many a wonder, woful moan
She made, that no lefe it wist
As she, which all her joy misd.
And now she swooneth; now she plaineth;
And all her face she distaineth
With tears, which as of a well,
The streams from her eyen fell,
So as she might; and ever anon
She cleped upon Demophoon,

BOOK
VIII.HISTORY OF
ENGLISH
POETRY.

And said, 'Alass! thou slow wight!
There never was such a knight,
That so thro his ungentleness,
Of sloth and of forgetfulness,
Against his truth breaketh his steven.'

And then her eye up to the heaven
She cast, and said, 'O thou unkind!
Here shalt thou thro thy sloth find,
If that thee list to come and see,
A lady dead for love of thee.' p. 100.

His description of Narcissus going to hunt, reaching a fountain, and falling in love with the image himself that he saw in it, is worth reading.

It fell him on a day, perchance,
That he in all his proud fare
Unto the forest gan to fare,
Among others that there were,
To hunt and disporte him there.
And when he came into the place
Where that he would make his chace,
The bounds were within a throw
Uncoupled, and the hornes blow.
The great hart anon was found,
With swift feet set on the ground,
And he with spur in horse's side,
Him hasteth faste for to ride,
Till all men be left behind.
And as he rode under a lind,
Beside a rock, as I thee tell,
He saw where sprung a lustie well.

The day was wondry hot withall,
And such a thirst was on him fall,
That he must either die or drink.
And down he light, and by the brink
He tied his horse unto a branch,
And laid him lowe, for to stanch
His thirst; and as he cast his look
Into the well, and heed took,
He saw the like of his visage,
And wende there were an image.

Of such a nymph, as then was faye;
Whereof that love his heart assay
Began,—and made him wene
It were a woman that he seen.

The more that he came the well nigh,
The near she came to him again.
So, wist he never was to sayn,
For when he wept, he saw her weep,
And when he cried, he took good keep,
The same word she cried also,
And thus began the newe woe.
Another while he goeth afar,
Another while he draweth near;
And ever he found her in one place.
He weepeth; he crieth; he asketh grace,
Whereas he might get none.

So that again a rock of stone,
As he that knew none other rede,
He smote himself till he was deade. p. 35.

Part of the king of Armenia's daughter, may be deduced as a favorable specimen of Gower's continuous narrative. This lady, Rosiphele, had only one suit;—she would love nobody. One year

When come was the month of May,
She would walk upon a day,
And that was, ere the sun arist:
Of women, but a few it wist.
And forth she went privily
Unto the park that was fast by;
All soft walkende on the grass,
Till she came where the land was,
Through which there ran a great river.
It thought her fair, and said 'Here
'I woll abide under the shawe.'
And bade her women to withdraw,
And there she stood, alone, still;
To think what was in her will.

She saw the sweet flowers spring;
She heard glad fowles sing;
She saw beasts in their kind,
The buck, the doe, the hart, the hind.

BOOK
VIII.HISTORY OF
ENGLISH
POETRY.

And as she cast her eye about,
She saw, clad in one suit, a rout
Of ladies, where they comen ride,
Along under the woody side.

On fair ambulend horse they sat,
That were all white, fair and great ;
And every one rode on side,
The saddles were of such a pride,
With pearls and gold so well begone,
So rich, saw she never none.

In kirtles and in copes rice,
They were clothed all alike ;
They were embroidered over all ;
Their bodies weren long and small.
The beauty of their fair face
Then may no earthly thing deface.
Corones on their heads they bare,
As each of them a queen were ;
That all the gold of Cræsus hall,
The least coronal of them all
Might not have bought, after the worth.
Thus comen they ridend forth.

The princess seeing them, drew herself aside, fi
pure bashfulness, and held her close under the bou
for she thought

She was not worthy to ask there,
From whence they came, or what they were ;
But lever than this world's good,
She would have wist how it stood,
And put her head a little out ;
And as she looked her about,
She saw comende under the lind,
A woman upon a horse behind.
The horse on which she road was black,
All lean and galled upon the back,
And halted, as he that were encloied,
Whereof the women were annoyed.

Thus was the horse in sorry plight,
And for all that, a star white
Amid in her front she had.
Her saddle eke was wonder bad,

In which the woeful woman sat ;
 And natheless, there was with that
 A rich bridle for the nones,
 Of gold and precious stones.
 Her coat was some deal too tore ;
 About her middle twenty score
 Of horse halters, and well more,
 There hanged that time then.

The woman was right fair of face,
 Altho she lacked other grace. p. 105.

The princess thought this last appearance might be able to inform who the others were, and therefore asked her. She answered, that they were formerly servants to Love. She was then questioned, who she herself was ; and replied, that she was a king's daughter, who scorned to have an affection for any one ; and was therefore doomed to wait upon the rest in that degraded form.

But with many passages like these, Gower has a great deal that is dull and unreadable now. Criticism cannot impart feeling and genius, but it can teach judgment. We seldom pardon in our own times the weeds for the flowers of a composition ; and our ancient poets, who had not learnt to separate them, suffer from the refinement of our taste, the extent of our acquisitions, and the correctness of our discrimination. Gower, to our ancestors, was like an orchard in a desert. He was therefore highly popular in his own days, and long celebrated afterwards ; till the widely diffused cultivation of our literature diminished his intrinsic value, and multiplied his rivals.⁵¹

⁵¹ Doctor Jamieson has given us this pleasing translation of one of Gower's old French ballads, which may be taken as a specimen of their style and subject :—

Now in this jolly time of May,
 To Eden I compare the ground ;

While

BOOK
VIII.HISTORY OF
ENGLISH
POETRY.

The account of Gower's poems may be closed with a few general remarks. Writers compose with minds full of those ideas and feelings of the age, which their individual nature has imbibed. These, after circulating awhile in themselves, gathering new associations, and receiving new tinctures from the peculiar experience and reflections, are issued from them to act in this improved or augmented state on the ideas and feelings of others. Scholastic reasoning, love, religion, war, and romance reading, were the prevailing employments of life in Gower's youth. He turned from war, but he pursued the rest, and with his mind stored with all that they taught, he sat down to compose a work, which, dropping the

While sings the merle and popinjay,*
Green herb and tree bloometh around,
And all for nature's feast are crown'd;
Venus is queen; all hearts obey,
And none to love may now say nay.

When this I see, and how her sway
Dame Nature over all extends;
And all that lives so warm so gay,
Each after kind to others tends,
Till liking life and being blends;
What marvel if my sighs bewray,
That none to love may now say nay.

To nettles must the rose give way,
And care and grief my garland weave;
Nor ever joy disperse one ray
To cheer me, if my lady leave
My love unblest, and me bereave
Of every hope to smite and say,
That none to love may now say nay.

Then go and try her ruth to move,
If aught thy skill my simple lay,
For thou and I too well approve
That none to love may now say nay.

* In this country the 'popinjay' certainly adds very little to the melody of the groves; but when the beautiful golden jay, which is common on the continent, condescends to sing, his notes, five or six in number, are remarkably sweet, full and mellow; and are the more to be prized, because he screams horribly at least ten times for once that he sings.—*Illust. North. Ant.* p. 432.

useless parts of what he had acquired, should give the world their valuable tuition with more profitable combinations. Thus, the improvement which he had derived from the schoolmen and the religious, he displayed in the new and important form of moral reasoning, completely separated from the theology and superstitions of his day. He has thus the great merit of beginning ethical reasoning and ethical poetry in England, distinct from the scholastic metaphysician on the one hand, and from the monk and mass-priest on the other. He was so anxious to keep his work from the machinery of the cloister, that he builds his fable on Venus, Cupid, and Genius, as Dante, apparently aiming at the same thing, as far as he dared, made Virgil his guide even thro the Inferno and the Purgatorio. These apparent anomalies of invention may be referred to a desire of escaping from the trammels of the legend, and of instructing mankind without too much offending the prejudices of the age. Hence Gower makes Genius a *priest* of Venus, uttering discourses very unlike what priests then made, but thereby obliquely teaching them what they ought to enforce. The habits of the age compelled or induced Gower to make his moral preceptor a priest—however dissimilar his Clerke of Venus was to the Roman ecclesiastic. There was both satire and instruction in this incongruous fable.

Thus, Gower's book took morality out of the hands of the monk, the friar, and the papal hierarchy; separated it from vulgar superstitions and sacerdotal machinery; and brought it down to the usual habits, and associated it with the general reasonings and intellect of the world. He presented ethics as a distinct branch of mental cultivation by laymen, and he

BOOK
VIII.HISTORY OF
ENGLISH
POETRY.

divided it for ever from the legends of the church. Brunne had begun this, but could not accomplish the emancipation. His information was not large enough, nor were his talents adequate to the task. But Gower's mind had embraced the whole range of thought and study in that day. He had identified with his genius all the tales of the romances, as well as the knowledge of the academy; and he, and perhaps he only, could then combine so much ethical reasoning, so many interesting tales, such a power of rhyming, and such ability of narration. We must all feel, that in illustrating the use and effects of the virtues and vices of mankind by pleasing tales of life and fancy, instead of monstrous and enslaving legends, he contributed more to the improvement of society than any writer in England that had preceded him. He put English poetry into a better path than it had then visited; he gave it more imagery, feeling, dialogue, sentiment and natural incident, than it had been connected with, until he wrote. He must therefore be allowed an honorable rank among the intellectual benefactors of his country, whether his actual writings be perused or forgotten.

As few will now read Gower's long Poem, it may not be unacceptable to add a concise ANALYSIS of it.

ANALYSIS

Of GOWER'S CONFESSIO AMANTIS.

GENIUS says, he will not only talk of love, 'but of other things, that touchen to the cause of vice;' that he will shew him all the vices one by one, that he may 'thereof take evidence to rule with his conscience.' He will therefore tell him of the Vices in order, and then shew the proprieties of Love.

Genius begins his tuition with stating, that the five 'Wyttēs,' or senses, are properly the gates thro which all things come to the

CHAP.
IV.POEMS OF
JOHN
GOWER.

mind. That the eye is the principal : Hence his first caution is to take care of the eye. He tells the story of Actæon, to prove to him 'What it is, a man to caste his eie amis.' And after adding another of Medusa, to advise him not to misuse his sight, he proceeds to the Hearing. He illustrates the evils that may occur from this sense, by tales of a Serpent and the Syrens ; and then proceeds to the Vices, on each of which he questions him how far he has committed them. He begins with Pride. Of this he distinguishes five species : The first, Hypocrisy : he inserts here an interesting tale of Paulina, p. 23, and the story of Sinon and the Trojan horse. To the second branch, 'Inobedience,' he adds the pleasing tale of Florent, p. 28. On Presumption, he tells the story of Capaneus, p. 32 ; another of the king of Hungary, which strongly fixes the attention, p. 33 ; and a third, of Narcissus, which is ably narrated, p. 35. He delineates Avauntance, or boasting, with the striking tale of Alboin the Lombard, p. 36. On the fifth division of pride, Vain-glory, he describes with good effect the story of Nebuchadnezzar, p. 39 ; and another, of a king and a knight, which contains many good passages, p. 41.

His Second Book begins with Envy. On its first sort, Pain at others joy, he describes forcibly his feelings on another approaching the lady he loves, p. 44, and the tale of Acis and Galatea. He expatiates on the second sort, Joy at others grief, with the story of the Envious Man, p. 47. He illustrates the head of Detraction with similar effusions of sentiment, and the tale of Constance ; and another on Demetrius, 49-57. On Dissimulation he also gives his feelings, and the tale of Dejanira, p. 61. To the topic of Supplantation, he adds an incident of Agamemnon's reign ; and the story of a Soldan ; and another, stating how Pope Celestine was deluded into a resignation of the papacy, 67 ; and a fourth, on Constantine the Great, which is dramatically narrated, p. 69.

His Third Book opens with Ire, or Anger. Its first head, Melancholy, has the pathetic tale of Canace, p. 73. On Strife, he expresses some pleasing thoughts, with an anecdote of Socrates, 77 ; and another, on Corones. On Hate he adds the tale of Palamedes, p. 80. He versifies some valuable sentiments on Impetuosity and Homicide, with the incident of Diogenes and Alexander, and the well-told adventures of Pyramus and Thisbe, p. 83. After other sentiments, p. 84, he narrates the stories, of Daphne, p. 85 ; of Nestor, p. 86 ; and of Orestes, p. 87. He paints ably the nature and evils of Wars, p. 90 ; and gives a very

BOOK
VIII.HISTORY OF
ENGLISH
POETRY.

fine tale of Alexander and the Robber, p. 91; of which bishop Lowth's thought, 'One murder makes a villain, millions a hero,' may be called the moral, and from which the comparison between Alexander and Bagshot the highwayman in the 'Adventurer,' may have been borrowed.—He describes Alexander's death with some excellent remarks, pp. 91, 92; and subjoins a tale of Achilles and Telephus, p. 93.

The Fourth Book begins with Sloth, which he distinguishes into several branches. Procrastination has three stories; on Dido, p. 95; Penelope, *ib.*; and the Ten Virgins, p. 96. On Pusillanimity, we have the story of Pygmalion and the Image very interestingly told, p. 97; and another, on Ligdus, p. 98. To Forgetfulness is a tale of Demophoon, p. 100; and to Negligence the stories of Phaëton and Dædalus, p. 102. Idleness has some impressive sentiment, and several tales; the interesting Princess of Armenia, p. 104; Jephtha, p. 106; Telemachus, p. 108; Protesilaus, p. 109; Saul, *ib.*; the Centaur, p. 110; Hercules and Achelous, which has a good description of the latter's changes of figure, p. 110; Penthesilea and Æneas, p. 111; Some valuable thoughts are here introduced on Gentility and Riches, p. 111; and also on the Idle, p. 113. This topic leads him to enumerate the inventors of the Arts, and to expatiate on the art of Alchymy, p. 113; and on Rhetoric, p. 114. His topic of Somnolence occasions the effusion of some pleasing thoughts, p. 116; and the interesting story of Ceyx, p. 117; and another on Cephalus, which is well told, p. 119; and one on Io, p. 120. To Sorrow, the tale of Iphis, which is worth reading, is applied, p. 122.

His Fifth Book commences with Avarice. After some sensible remarks, occurs the story of Midas, which is very well told, p. 125. Good observations on Gold is followed by the sufferings of Tantalus, p. 126. On Jealousy, he expresses some striking sentiment, p. 127; and the affair of Mars and Venus, p. 128. He takes occasion to dissert on the Idolatry of the Ancients, p. 129; and to describe their Deities, 130–136. To this dull part he annexes a contrast of Christianity, p. 136; and an abuse of Lollardy, 137. On Covetousness, he narrates the tales of Crassus, 139; of a king, p. 140; and of the emperor Frederic, p. 141; some interesting sentiment, p. 142; and a tale of the Steward of Apulia, which is worth perusal, p. 144. Under the head of Perjury, he tells the story of Thetis, p. 145; and the long one of Medea, which contains some impressive descriptions and dialogue,

p. 148. That of Æson's renovation follows, p. 153, which is also worthy of notice; and that of Athamas, p. 155. Usury has the Echo, p. 158, and Babio, p. 159. Ingratitude has a tale of Adrian, which attracts the attention, p. 160; and one of Theseus and Ariadne, p. 162. Rapine has the well-told story of Tereus, p. 165; and Robbery has Pallas and Lichaon, p. 170. An encomium on Virginity, p. 171, is attended by a tale, 172. Thoughts on Stealth are illustrated by tales of Orchamus and Iole, 174, 175. Sacrilege, by those of Lucius, 177; and of Paris, p. 180; with many good remarks, p. 178. The topic of Prodigality closes this book.

Gule, or Gluttony, opens the Sixth Book, with some well-reasoned verses, 184; and the story of Jupiter's two baskets, p. 186; of Bacchus, 187; of Perithous, *ib.*; and of Galba, p. 188. The head of Delicacies has the parable of Lazarus, 189; and some pleasing sentiments on the Female world, 191; a short account of Nero, p. 192; and some remarks on Love, 193. His reasoning on Magic has the tale of Circe, p. 194; a romantic story of Ulysses, well told, p. 195; another long one, of Nectanebus, which has several passages that will be read with pleasure, 197-201; and one of Zoroaster, p. 202.

The poet having heard that Alexander was taught by Aristotle, 'his heart sore longeth to know' what he learnt, p. 202; and in the Seventh Book, Genius declares, that he will rehearse to him 'The Schole of Aristotle, and eke the fare of Alisander, how he was taught,' *ib.* He now proceeds to lecture on Philosophy: his topics are, Theorica; Physike, p. 203; Mathematics and the Elements, 204; Fire, 205; the Complexions, 206; Geography, 207; Astronomy, 208; Astrology, 210; Rhetoric, Logic, and Ethics, 216; Economics and Politics, 217. To Kings he enforces the duty of truth, with stories of Darius, 218, and of Zerubbabel, Apame, and Admetus. He also admonishes on Largesse, 219; with a tale on a Roman Knight. His head of Flattery has three stories: Diogenes, p. 221; Roman Emperors, 222; and Ahab, 224. The topic of Justice is illustrated by the story of Fabricius, p. 226; a Roman Prætor, *ib.*; Cambyses, 227; and Lycurgus, *ib.* On Pity, we have the tale of a Jew, 229; Codrus, 230; several minor ones, and the history of Gideon, p. 234. Further advice to Kings occurs, p. 236; with several small narrations. The incidents of Tarquin and Appius follow, pp. 244 & 246.

The Eighth Book exhibits a prosaic Sketch of Scripture History, p. 249; remarks on Incest, and a tale of Antiochus; with a very

BOOK VIII. long one on Appolinus prince of Tyre, tedious as a whole, but with some better passages, 252-265.

HISTORY OF
ENGLISH
POETRY.

A Conclusion of some length is most remarkable for the commemoration of Chaucer, which he puts into the mouth of Venus, p. 272 :—

And grete well Chaucer, whan ye mete
As my diciple and my poete ;
For in the flowres of his youth,
In sondrie wise, as he well couth,
Of ditees and of songes glade,
The which, he for my sake made,
The londe fulfilled is oner all.
Whereof to hym in speciall,
Above all other I am most holde,
For thy, nowe in his daies olde,
Thou shalt hym tell this message,
That he vpon his latter age,
To sette an ende of all his worke
As he whiche is myn owne clerke,
Do make his testament of loue
As thou hast done thy shrifte above.
So that my courte it maie recorde. Book 8.

It is not clear from this passage, whether Chaucer was writing his Testament of Love, or had written it ; but the words ‘ vpon his latter age’ imply that it was written in the old age of Chaucer.

CHAP. V.

LIFE AND POEMS OF CHAUCER.

THE life of Chaucer has been written principally upon suppositions, and therefore as it usually appears is full of uncertainty. The exact times of his birth and death are unknown. It is intended in the present sketch to avoid the illusive ground of conjecture, to select the facts that are authenticated by subsisting records, and to refer the reader for the suppositions to our poet's biographers.

CHAP
V.

In 1386, he stated himself, on his legal examination as a witness, to be of the age of forty years and upwards.¹ If Chaucer had then been, as is commonly supposed, fifty-eight,² it would have been a violation of truth for him to have conveyed an idea that he was but forty and upwards. The examination is in writing, and the whole sworn to. This was a further reason with him for greater accuracy. To the usual question on such occasions, as to the age of the witness, we cannot doubt that Chaucer's answer was meant to be accurate. If, as sometimes happens, the witness is not certain as to the exact year of his birth, a round

¹ This evidence was given on the 12th October, in the tenth year of Richard II. in an heraldic question about arms, depending in the Court Military between sir Richard le Scrope and sir Robert Grosvenor. See the Record in the Appendix to Mr. Godwin's Chaucer, vol. 1. p. 479.

² The usual date assigned to the birth of Chaucer is 1328. The record states that he had borne arms 27 years. It is far more likely that he had taken up arms at the usual age of 16 or 18, than at 31. I am sensible that the time preferred in the text, as the era of his birth, dislocates the received chronology of his works, but it will not be found inconsistent with any of them.

BOOK
VIII.HISTORY OF
ENGLISH
POETRY.

number nearest to it is that which is usually recollected and inserted. We may therefore from this document consider Chaucer to have been but a few years more than forty in 1386. Allowing five or six years for the addition, this would place his birth about 1340, a date that is most congruous with the authentic facts of his life and works.

Chaucer was one of the few poets who have experienced that successful career in life, which, in the dreams of youthful fancy, all the wooers of the Muse so fondly hope to attain. In 1367, he had a grant of twenty marcs a year from Edw. III. and is called in that "Valettus noster."³ The age of twenty-seven suits this appellation better than forty. In 1370, he was employed on the king's business in foreign parts;⁴ and two years afterwards, was sent on a special embassy with two others to the Doge of Genoa.⁵ With these appointments, the age of thirty and thirty-two is sufficiently compatible. In 1374, the king granted him a pitcher of wine a day,⁶ and also the office of comptroller of the customs, and subsidy of wool, leather, and woollen skins, at the port of London.⁷ In the following year he obtained the wardship of a young heir, from which he received a pecuniary benefit.⁸ In 1376, the king presented him with a gift of

³ The Appendixes to Mr. Godwin's Life of Chaucer, contain all the public documents concerning it. This grant is in vol. 2. p. 618.

⁴ The protection, or passport, says, 'Galfridus Chaucer, qui in obsequium nostrum ad partes transmarinas de precepto nostro profecturus est.' Godwin, App. p. 620.

⁵ Ib. p. 620. In this he is called 'Scutiferi nostri.'

⁶ Ib. p. 621. He is named here, 'Armigero nostro.'

⁷ Ib. p. 622. This certainly states, that Chaucer should write with his own hand his rolls, and should execute his office 'in propria persona sua,' and not by substitute. But we may presume this to be the usual official rule.

⁸ Ib. p. 623.—The ward paid to Chaucer, for the guardianship and marriage, 104*l.* ib. p. 627.

71 *l.* 4 *s.* 6 *d.* a custom-house forfeiture.⁹ In the next year, he appears to have been employed again on the king's secret service abroad.¹⁰ These were the liberalities which he received from Edward III.

Sometime after 1370, and before 1381, he married a lady who had been one of the damsels of queen Philippa, and who for that service had the grant of an annuity of ten pounds a year.¹¹ Richard II. in the fourth year of his reign, confirmed his grandfather's annuities to both Chaucer and his wife, and added another of twenty marcs in lieu of the pitcher of wine.¹² In 1382, Richard made him comptroller of the small customs of the port of London, at the same time allowing him to execute it by deputy.¹³ In 1384, the king gave him a leave of absence on his own concerns for a month, on condition of leaving a sufficient deputy in his first comptrollership.¹⁴ Three months afterwards, he granted him a written permission to execute

CHAP.
V.

LIFE AND
POEMS OF
CHAUCER.

⁹ The owner had taken some wool from London to Durdraught, without paying custom or obtaining a licence. Godw. App. p. 624.

¹⁰ 'In quibusdam secretis negotiis regis,' *ib.* p. 624. Froissart mentions, that about this time a secret treaty was made between Edward and the king of France; that the marriage of Richard with a French princess was discussed; and that 'Geoffry Caucher' was one of the envoys sent by Edward. This has been applied to Chaucer. Froiss. vol. 1. c. 325.

¹¹ I infer these dates from these facts. Chaucer's treatise on the Astro-labe contains the date of an observation in 1391, and mentions his son Lewis as ten years old. Lewis was born, and of course his father was married, before 1381. The document printed from Rymer, in Godwin's Appendix, p. 629, states Chaucer's wife Philippa to have been one of the 'domicellorum' of queen Philippa, and to have been allowed for her 'good service' an annuity of ten marcs. The grants to the domicellæ of the queen are dated 1370, *ib.* p. 619; and among these is one to 'Philippa Pycard,' who, from being called by her maiden name, must have been then unmarried. These three authorities therefore, compared together, place Chaucer's marriage between 1370 and 1381; the date of his birth, inserted in the text, makes his age in these years to be between 30 and 41. On the common date of his birth he would have married between 42 and 53, which is less likely.

¹² Godw. App. pp. 628, 629.

¹³ *Ib.* 629.

¹⁴ *Ib.* 630, 'pro quibusdam urgentibus negotiis ipsum tangentibus.' Dated 25 Nov. 1384.

BOOK
VIII.HISTORY OF
ENGLISH
POETRY.

this office by deputy, as long as he should hold it.¹⁵ In 1388, Chaucer surrendered up the two grants of annuity, and, at his request, an annuity to their amount was given to one John Scalby, for life.¹⁶ In the next year, Chaucer was appointed clerk of the royal works at various places;¹⁷ and in 1390, was directed to cause the collegiate chapel at Windsor to be repaired.¹⁸

Four years afterwards, Richard settled on him again an annuity of twenty pounds a year.¹⁹ In 1398, a curious and important document appears: It recites, that the king had ordered Chaucer to transact and expedite for him several arduous and urgent affairs, as well in his absence as in his presence, in various parts within the kingdom of England; that Chaucer was afraid, that while thus pursuing the king's business, he should be molested or prosecuted by his rivals, and by many complaints and suits, and had therefore requested the king to aid him in this respect: Richard then, for Chaucer's security, takes him under his special protection; and directs that he shall be free from all arrest, injury, violence, or impediment for two years.²⁰ Five months afterwards,

¹⁵ Godw, App. p. 631, dated 17 Feb. In December 1386, there appear grants of similar controllerships to two other persons. I am not satisfied that these were Chaucer's, and that they imply his dismissal, because this leave to appoint a deputy, states that there were other controllers of these same customs then in office: 'Absque impedimento collectorum custumarum et subsidiorum nostrorum *predictorum* in portu predicto pro tempore existentium.' p. 631.

¹⁶ Ib. p. 632.

¹⁷ 'At our palace at Westminster, the tower of London, castle of Berkhamstead; our manors of Kenyngton, Eltham, Claryndon, Shene, Byflete, Childern, Langeley, and Feckenham; our lodge at Hathebergh, and our lodges in our parks of Claryndon, Childerne, and Feckenham; and our mutas for our falcons at Charyngcrouch: And to take all workmen, &c. and place them at our works; and to provide all stone, lead, glass, and other necessaries.' It also orders him to pay for all these—'et ad computandum de denariis,' &c. Ib. pp. 633-635.

¹⁸ Ib. p. 635.

¹⁹ Ib. p. 637.

²⁰ Ib. pp. 637, 638; this is dated 4 May 1398.

the king granted him a pipe of wine annually.²¹ The next year Richard was deposed.

It was in August that the reign of Richard ceased. In the following October, the new sovereign, Henry, confirmed Richard's donation of the twenty marcs a year, and the pipe of wine, and added a further annuity of forty marcs.²² The last document as to Chaucer, is an indenture of lease, dated 24 December 1399, from the keeper of the chapel of the priory of Westminster, to Chaucer, of a tenement in the garden of the chapel, for a term of fifty-three years, at a rent of fifty-three shillings and fourpence.²³ This instrument proves that Chaucer was alive at the end of 1399, and was then well enough to take a new lease for fifty-three years.

To these authenticated facts, we can add a few others from his works. In his Testament of Love, he complains, that he had been either once or twice arrested,²⁴ and was in prison,²⁵ and abandoned by all. He talks highly of his former prosperity, and of the flattery and courtly respect which he then received.²⁶ He says, " Altho I had little in respect of other great and worthy, yet had I a faire parcel as me thoght for the time ; I had richesse sufficiantly

CHAP
V.

LIFE AND
POEMS OF
CHAUCEER

²¹ Godw. App. pp. 638, 639 ; dated 15 Oct. 1398.

²² Ib. pp. 639 and 640 ; dated 13 Oct. and 18 Oct. 1399.

²³ Ib. pp. 640-642. Thus the actual records that we have of Chaucer's life leave off when he was 59, according to the time of his birth stated in the text.

²⁴ ' When thou were arrested and first time emprisoned,' p. 284. ' Is not thy first arrest passed that brought thee in mortal sorrow,' p. 289.

²⁵ ' I endure my penance in this dark prison,' p. 467. ' Depe in this pining pit, with woe I lie stocked,' p. 468.

²⁶ ' While I was glorious in worldly welfulnesse, and had soche goodes in wealth as maken men riche, tho [then] was I draw into compaignie that loos, prise, and nameyeven ; Tho louteden blasours, tho curreiden glosours, tho welcomed flatterers, tho worshipped thilke that now deinen not to looke.' Chauc. Test. p. 279.

BOOK
VIII.HISTORY OF
ENGLISH
POETRY.

to weive neede. I had dignitie to be reverenced in worship; power methought that I had to keepe fro mine enemies, and me seemed to shine in glory of renome as manhood asketh in meane; for no wight, in mine administration, could none evils ne treachery by soth cause on me put."²⁷ With this pleasing picture of former comforts, he contrasts his present unhappy state. "For riches, now have I poverty; for dignitie, now am I emprisoned; instede of power, wretchednesse I suffer; and for glory of renome, am now dispised and foullich hated."²⁸ He complains that his worldly goods had been "fullich dispent," and that he was "bereafte out of the dignitie of office,"²⁹ in which he had accumulated his property. "Seven years have I grafted and grubbed a vine, and with all the ways I could I sought to fede me of the grape, but fruit have I found none."³⁰

If we search his works to discover why this reverse had befallen him, we find him declaring, that he had joined some "conjurations" in his youth, for objects that he thought noble and glorious to all the people;³¹ that he cared little for the hate of the mighty senators of London, or of its commonalty;³² that in the confederacies made by his "soveraigns," he was but a servant.³³ He intimates that he had made some

²⁷ Chauc. Test. p. 289.²⁸ Ib. p. 289.²⁹ Ib. p. 280.³⁰ Ib. p. 276.³¹ 'In my youth I was drawn to be assenting, and in my might helping to certain conjurations and other great matters of ruling of citizens, and these things have been my drawers in and excitors to the matters, so painted and coloured, that at first to me seemed then noble and glorious to all the people.' p. 277.³² Chauc. Test. p. 277.³³ 'Of tho confederacies maked by my soveraigns, I was but a servaunt; and yet mokell meane folke woll fullye, ayenst reason, thilke matters mainteine, in which maintenaunce glorien themselfe; and thereof ought nothing in evile to be laid to me wards, sithen as repentant I am tourned.' p. 289.

discoveries, and when they were declared to be false, that he had offered to prove them by arms to be true; and that when the king and his princes "by huge wordes and great, looked after variaunce" in his speech, he had prepared his body for "Mars's doing, if any contraried his sawes."³⁴

CHAF
V.
—
LIFE AND
POEMS OF
CHAUCER
—

He mentions also his exile, and that those whom he had served, never refreshed him with the value of the least coined plate; that when he was imprisoned they fast hied; that some owed him money for their commons; that he had paid some of their expenses till they were turned out of Zealand; that none even gave him any thing for the journies he had made; that some of them took money for his chamber, and put the profit in their purse; that he had fled, as long as he could, to conceal their privy; and those who owed him money would pay nothing, because they thought his return impossible.³⁵ He asserts strongly his integrity while in office.³⁶ To what part of Chaucer's life, to which of the public events of Richard's reign, these personal evils are to be referred, is mere matter of conjecture, and must remain matter of doubt. There are other periods besides the one usually selected, to which they are applicable.³⁷

³⁴ Chauc. Test. 278. 284.

³⁵ Ib. p. 278.

³⁶ 'While I administered the office of common doing as in ruling of the stablishments emongs the people, I defouled never my conscience for no manner deede, but ever by wit and by counsaile of the wisest, the matters weren drawn to their right endes.' p. 279. These expressions may allude to the royal buildings and establishments of which he was appointed the comptroller.

³⁷ Mr. Godwin refers them to his being concerned in the city troubles of John of Northampton. I would myself rather apply them to a later period. The 'stablishments' mentioned in the preceding note suit better his situation of clerk of the royal buildings, than the mere receipt of custom. The continued favors from Richard make it unlikely that he had joined any party against the court. The leave of absence for a month, in 1384, and the permission to appoint a deputy in 1385, are against the supposition of his having been concerned with John of Northampton.

The

BOOK
VIII.HISTORY OF
ENGLISH
POETRY.

A few more particulars of his life are intimated in some of his poems. We find him complaining in his *Dream*, a poem written in his youth, that he was then in a state of nervous melancholy and mental indifference, from a habit of sleeplessness;³⁸ and that he was suffering a heaviness, and dread of death.³⁹ He refers to a sickness, which had lasted eight years, as the probable cause of it.⁴⁰ In his Prologue to the *Legend of Good Women*, he describes himself as pre-

The protection given him in 1398, implies that he was intermeddling in dangerous business for the king. It was in Sept. 1397 that Gloucester was murdered, and the next year Richard began those tyrannical and illegal measures, in which, from this singular protection, I am tempted to infer that Chaucer was assisting; for that actually states, that he was then transacting for the king, in various parts of England, '*ardua et urgentia negocia*,' for which he might be inquired and prosecuted (*implacitari*.) On this supposition, it may have been Henry who threw him into prison. That Henry, after his coronation, was kind to Richard's friends, we learn from his having been censured for it; and if he could forgive Salisbury, we may believe that Chaucer's genius and popularity would induce him not to leave the pleasing poet unpardoned or neglected.

³⁸ I have great wonder by this light,
How I live, for day, ne night
I may not sleepe wel nigh nought,
I have so many an idle thought,
Purely for default of sleepe;
That by my trowth I take no keepe
Of nothing, how it commeth or gothe;
To me nis nothing lefe nor lothe.
All is yliche good to me,
Joy or sorrow, where so it be.
For I have feeling in nothing;
But as it were a mased thing.
All day in point to fall adaun,
For sorrowful imaginacioun,
Is alway wholly in my mind.

Chaucer's *Dream*, 320.

³⁹ I ne may ne night ne morrow
Sleepe, and this melancholie
And drede I have for to die;
Defaut of sleepe and heavinesse;
Hath slaine ny spirit of quickenesse.
That I have lost all lustyhead,
Such fantasies ben in mine head
So I not what is best to do.—Ib.

⁴⁰ I hold it to be a sicknesse
That I have suffred this eight yore.—Ib.

ferring reading to every other amusement.⁴¹ In his House of Fame, he alludes to his writing in his study, of a night, till his head became painfully affected.⁴² He intimates, that when his labor and reckoning were done, he went home to be absorbed in reading instead of rest and novelties, and there lived like a hermit, except in abstinence.⁴³ He closes this poem with a determination to read and study every day.⁴⁴ He writes of alchymy in his Chanones Yemaune's Tale, as if he had understood and pursued it;⁴⁵ he builds this story upon it. His quotations from Seneca and Juvenal,⁴⁶ and his translation of Boethius,⁴⁷ announce his attention to the classics. Of Dante and Petrarch, he speaks repeatedly in terms of high commendation, as if their works had been his favorites.⁴⁸

⁴¹ On bookes for to rede I me delite;
And to him yeve I faith and full credence:
And in mine herte have hem in reverence,
So hertely; that there is gane none
That fro my bookes maketh no to gone.

Prol. p. 299.

⁴² - - - That thou wilt make
A night full oft thine head to ake,
In thy study so thou writest.

House of Fame, p. 350.

⁴³ For whan thy labour all done is,
And hast made all thy reckonings;
Instead of rest and new things,
Thou goest home to thine house anone,
And also dombe as a stone,
Thou sittest at another booke,
Till fully dased is thy looke:
And livest thus as an hermite,
Although thine abstinence is lite.

Ib. p. 350.

⁴⁴ Wherefore to study, and rede alway
I purpose to do, day by day.

Ib. p. 361.

⁴⁵ Cant. Tales, p. 138.

⁴⁶ Ib. p. 53.

⁴⁷ Chalmers' ed.

⁴⁸ He calls Dante 'The wise poet of Florence,' Cant. Tales, p. 52, and often mentions him, as pp. 55. 127.—Of Petrarch, he says,

- - - - - The laureat poete
- - - - - whos rhetorike swete
Enlumined all Itaille of poetrie.—p. 61.

BOOK
VIII.HISTORY OF
ENGLISH
POETRY.

On the usual detail of Chaucer's life, beyond these authentic circumstances; and on the reasonings, often more ingenious than satisfactory, with which the additional surmises are supported; the former works of his able biographers and critics may be profitably consulted.⁴⁹ They place his death in 1400. Tho I am not inclined to extend, with Leland, his life to the reign of Henry V.⁵⁰ who acceded in 1413, yet I am not convinced that it ought not to be a few years later. But if his death be placed in 1400, still the year taken for his birth, will allow him to have been sixty years of age when he died; a term old enough for all the intimations that relate to his age.

The chronology of Chaucer's works is as hypothetical as that of his life. That he wrote the Court of Love at eighteen, has been inferred from one of its lines, which yet seems to imply the contrary.⁵¹ It would appear more natural that his first work should be his translation, "The Romaunt of the Rose;" a translation remarkable for rendering his author commonly line by line, and yet with the spirit and freedom of an original poem.⁵²

⁴⁹ The principal of these are Leland's hasty sketch, Script. Brit. p. 419; Thomas Speght's Life, prefixed to his works in 1597; Francis Thynne's Animadversions, 1599, lately printed by Mr. Todd; Tyrwhitt's Life, prefixed to the Canterbury Tales; Mr. Alexander Chalmers' neat summary of his biography, in the first volume of his Poets; and Mr. Godwin's larger work.

⁵⁰ Lel. Scrip. Brit. p. 424. Yet that Chaucer was dead in 1410, when John the Chaplain wrote, may be inferred from his expressions, noticed before.

⁵¹ He says, Love commanded him to see the Court of Love, 'Whan I was young, at eighteen yeare of age.' p. 367. This is not that he wrote the poem at eighteen. The imperfect tense *was* rather indicates, that tho he makes that age the time of the action of his poem, he had passed beyond it when he wrote it.

⁵² Of this poem, the first 5370 French lines are translated in about 5700 of Chaucer's. This is the part written by the author who planned and began the work. Chaucer then misses about 6000 lines of his original

He refers, himself, to his Dream, as having been made in his youth.⁵³ This purports to be on Blanche, the duchess of Lancaster;⁵⁴ and as she died in 1369, this fact settles both the chronology of the poem, and also of the time of Chaucer's youth.⁵⁵ His Troilus and Creseide had been referred to his youth by Lydgate.⁵⁶ His Legend of Good Women he wrote for the queen;⁵⁷ and in this he mentions, besides the poems already noticed, his House of Fame, the Parliament of Fowles, and Palamon and Arcite, his poem on the Magdalen, with some ballads and hymns.⁵⁸ In his House of Fame, he says that he was old.⁵⁹ His Canterbury Tales were

and renders from verse 11,253 to 13,105 of the French second part, or 1852 lines, in about 1900 English, mostly exact, but sometimes paraphrased.

⁵³ In his Man of Lawe's Prologue, he says of himself, 'in youthe he made of Ceyx and Alcyon,' p. 36, which is the first part of his Dream.

⁵⁴ He says,

And faire *white* she hite,
That was my ladies *name* right,
She was thereto faire and bright.
She had not her name wrong.—p. 326.

He mentions her in his Prologue to the Legend of Good Women—

And eke the death of Blaunche the duchesse.—p. 302.

⁵⁵ He could not therefore have been born in 1328, as that would make him forty-one when he composed this poem. Taking the date of his birth as 1340, he would have been twenty-nine when this lady died, which is full late enough for his youth. In this poem he mentions the Romaunt of the Rose, p. 323. I would infer that he had then translated, or was translating it.

⁵⁶ Chaucer himself, in his Prologue to the Legend of Good Women, mentions his Romaunt of the Rose and Creseide three times; but twice out of these he puts the Romaunt first:

Thou hast translated the Romaunt of the Rose,
And of Creside - - -
Or in the Rose, or else in Creseide.

⁵⁷ And 'Whan this boke is made, yeve it the quene.'—p. 302.

⁵⁸ Legend, p. 302.

⁵⁹ His 'reckenings,' mentioned in note 43, have been thought by Mr. Tyrwhit to warrant the placing this poem before he left the Customs, or before 1386. But it will full as well suit his situation as comptroller of the king's works from 1389, in which his patent orders him to provide all the materials, to pay for them, and to *reckon* the money for them 'ad computandum de denariis.' See before, note 17.—In 1389 he was, on our supposition, about fifty. In any year between that and 1399, he may have written his House of Fame.

BOOK
VIII.HISTORY OF
ENGLISH
POETRY.

his last compositions. Some specimens of his style and works may be now subjoined.

In "Troilus and Creseide," we have one of his longest poems, and that which was most admired by Beaumont and Sidney. As a whole, it is very tedious; but it displays that fluency of style and abundance of ideas, which lift Chaucer so much above his contemporaries. Some parts may be cited, to shew his power of dramatic and natural dialogue. Creseide was a widow, when her uncle Pandarus visited her, to disclose the love of Troilus, and to persuade her to favor it:—

WHEN he was come unto his neeces place,
 'Where is my lady?' to her folk quod he.
 And they him told, and he forth in gan pace,
 And found two other ladies sit, and shee
 Witlin a paved parlour, and they three
 Herden a maiden hem reden the geste
 Of the siege of Thebes, while hem leste.

Quod Pandarus, 'Madame, God you see,
 With your booke, and all the companie.'
 'Eigh! Uncle mine! welcome I wis,' quod she.
 And up she rose, and by the hond in hie
 She tooke him fast, and said, 'This night shrie,
 To good mote it turn, of you I met.'
 And with that word, she down on bench him set.

'Yea, neece, ye shall faren well the bet,
 If God woll, all this yeare,' quod Pandarus,
 'But I am sorry that I have you let
 To hearken of your booke, ye praisen thus.
 For Godes love what saith it, tell it us,
 Is it of love, or some good ye me lere.'
 'Uncle!' quod she, 'your maistresse is nat here.'

With that they gonnen laugh, and tho she seide,
 'This romaunce is of Thebes, that we rede,'
 Quod Pandarus 'All this know I my selve,


And all th' assiege of Thebes, and the care—
 But let be this, and tell me how ye fare.
 Do way your barbe, and shew your face bare.
 Do way your booke, rise up and let us daunce,
 And let us done to May some observaunce.'
 'Eigh, God forbid,' quod she, 'be ye mad?
 Is that a widdowes life?
 By God! ye maken me right sore adrad,
 Ye ben so wild, it seemeth as ye rave.
 It sat me well bet aye in a cave
 To bide, and rede on holy saintes lives.
 Let maidens gon to dance, and yonge wives.'
 'As ever thrive I,' quod this Pandarus,
 'Yet could I tell a thing to done you play.'
 'Now, Uncle deare!' quod she, 'tell it us'—

He defers awhile to gratify her curiosity—
 Then gan she wondren more than before,
 A thousand fold, and downe her eyen cast.
 For never sith the time that she was bore,
 To knowen thing desired she so fast,
 And with a sike, she said hem at the last,
 'Now, Uncle mine! I nill you not displease,
 Nor asken more that may do you disease.'

Pandarus, apprehensive lest she should dislike his
 friend Troilus, hesitates to mention his subject:—
 And with that word he gan right inwardly
 Beholden her, and looken in her face,
 And said, 'On such a mirrour, much good grace.'
 And looked on her in busie wise.
 And she was 'ware that he beheld her so.
 'Ah, Lord!' quod she, 'so fast ye me avise,
 Saw ye me never ere now; what say ye no.'
 'Yes, yes,' quod he, 'and bet woll ere I go,
 But by my trowth I thought nowe, if ye
 Be fortunate. For now men shall it see.'⁶⁰

From this little natural picture of the easy sportive
 feelings, we may pass to the poet's portrait of his hero

⁶⁰ Troilus and Creseid, pp. 237-239.

BOOK
VIII.HISTORY OF
ENGLISH
POETRY.


in his violent emotions. Troilus learns that his Creseide is to be sent out of Troy to the Grecian camp—
His love takes the alarm, and fills him with grief:—

He rest hem up, and every dore he shette,
And window eke, and tho this sorrowful man
Upon his beddes side doune hem sette,
Full like a dead image pale and wan :
And in his breast the heaped wo began
Outbrust ; and he to worken in this wise
In his woodnesse, as I shall you devise.

Right as the wilde bull beginneth spring,
Now here, now there i-darted to the herte ;
And of his death, roreth in complaining.
Right so gan he about the chamber stert,
Smiting his breast, aye, with his fistes smert.
His head to the wall, his body to the ground,
Full oft he swapt, himselven to confound.

His eyen too, for pitie of his herte,
Outstremeden, as swift as welles twey.
The highe sobes of his sorrowes smert
His speech him reft. Unnethes might he sey
‘ O death ! alas ! why nilt thou do me dey ?
Accursed be that day, which that nature
Shope me to ben a lives creature.’

But after whan the fury, and all the rage
Which that his heart twist, and fast threst,
By length of time somewhat gan assuage ;
Upon his bed he laid hem down to rest.
But tho begon his teares more out to brest.
That wonder is, the body may suffice
To halfe this wo, which that I you devise.

Than said he thus. ‘ Fortune ! alas the while !
What have I done ? What have I thee agilt ?
How mightest thou for routhe me beguile ?
Is there no grace ? And shall I thus be spilt ?
Shall thus Creseide away, for that thou wilt ?
Alas ! how mightest thou in thine herte find,
To ben to me, thus cruell and unkind !

Have I thee nat honored all my live,
 As well thou wotest, above the gods all?
 Why wilt thou me fro joy thus deprive?
 O Troilus!—what may men now thee call,
 But wretch of wretches! out of honor fall
 Into misery!—in which I woll bewaile
 Creseide, alas! till that the breath me faile.’⁶¹

With great strength of feeling he thus describes the
 parting of the two lovers, after the order given for
 their separation, that she might be taken to her father,
 who was among the Grecians:

Sooth is, that whan they gonne first to mete,
 So gan the paine hir hertes for to twist,
 That neither of hem other mighte grete;
 But hem in armes tooke, and after kist.
 The lesse wofull of hem bothe nist
 Where that he was; ne might o word outbring
 As I said erst, for wo and for sobbing.

But whan hir wofull, wery ghostes twaine
 Returned ben, there as hem ought to dwell,
 And that somewhat to weken ‘gan the paine
 By length of plaint; and ebban gan the well
 Of his teares, and the herte unswell;
 With broken voice—al horse for shrigh, Creseid
 To Troilus, these ilke wordes seid.

“O Jove! I die—and mercy thee beseech.
 Helpe, Troilus!”—and therewithal her face
 Upon his brest she laid, and lost her spech;
 Her wofull spirite, from his proper place
 Right with the word away, in point to pace.
 And thus she lith; with hewes pale and grene;
 That whilom fresh and fairest was to sene.

This Troilus, that on her gan behold;
 Cleping her name; and as she lay for deed
 Withouten answer; and felt her limmes cold;
 Her eien throwen upward to her heed;
 This sorrowful man, can now non other rede.

⁶¹ Troilus and Creseid, book 4, p. 267.

BOOK
VIII.HISTORY OF
ENGLISH
POETRY.

But, oft time, her cold mouth he kist,
Where him was wo, God and himself it wist.⁶²

It is pleasing to see a great author entering, were, into a competition with himself, by attending new descriptions of similar emotions. Not perhaps more displays the fertility and largeness of genius, than to depict resembling scenes with novelty and yet with undiminished effect. Thus Chaucer paints Troilus again on his return from attending Creseide on her way to the Grecian camp:—

- - - With felon loke, and face dispitous,
Tho sodainly doun from his hors he stert
And thro his paleis, with swolne herte,
To chamber he went. Of nothing toke he hede;
Ne none to him dare speke o worde for drede.

And there his sorowes that he spared had,
He yave an issue large, and death he cride:
And in his throwes, frenetike and mad,
He curseth Juno, Apollo, and eke Cupide;
He curseth Bacchus, Ceres, and Cipride;
His birth; himselfe; his fate; and eke nature;
And, save his ladie, every creature.

To bed he goth; and weileth there and turneth
In furie; as doth he, Ixion, in Hell;
And in this wise he, nigh till day sojourneth:
But tho began his herte alife unswell
Thro teares, which that gonnen up to wel;
And, pitiously, he cried upon Creseide.
And to himself right thus he spake and seide.

“Where is mine owne lady, lefe and dere?
Where is her white neck? where is it? where?
Where been her armes, and her iyen clere,
That yesterday, this time, with me were?
Now may I wepe alone many a teare,
And graspe about I may:—But, in this place,
Save a pilew, I find naught to embrace.

⁶² Troilus and Creseid, book 4. p. 274.

"How shal I doen? Whan shal she come againe?

I not; alas! why let I her go?

Ah! would God I had as tho be slain!

O herte mine! Creseide! O swete fo!

O lady mine! that I love mo and mo.

To whom for ever more mine herte I vowe;

See how I die;—Ye nill me not rescowe.

"Who seeth you now, my right lodesterre?

Who sitteth right now in your presence?

Who can comforten now your hertes werre?

Now I am gon, whom yeve ye audience?

Who speaketh for me right now in my absence?

Alas! no wight—and that is all my care;

For well wot I, as evill as I, ye fare."

And whan he fill in any slombringes,

Anon begin he shoulde for to grone;

And dremen of the dreadfulest thinges

That might been: as mete he were alone

In place horrible, making aie his mone;

Or meten that he was emonges all

His enemies, and in hir hondes fall.

And therewithall his bodie should start,

And with the start, all sodainly awake;

And soche a tremour fele about his herte,

That of the feare his bodie should quake.

And therewithall he should a noise make,

And seme as though he should fall depe

From high alofe; and than he would wepe.⁶³

It is a pretty thought in Chaucer to make Troilus,
his calmer moments, revisit the spot where he had
arted from her:

And after this he to the gates went,

There as Creseide outrode, a full good paas;

And up and down there made he many a went,

And to himselfe ful oft he said, "Alas!

"Fro hence rode my blisse, and my solas;

Ah, would blisful God now for his joie,

I might here sene ayen come to Troie.

⁶³ Troilus and Creseid, book 5. pp. 280, 281.

BOOK
VIII.HISTORY OF
ENGLISH
POETRY.

“ And to the yonder hil I gan her guide ;
 Alas ! and there I toke of her my leve ;
 And yonde I saw her to her father ride,
 For sorow of which mine herte shal to cleve.
 And hither home I come when it was eve :
 And here I dwell, outcast from all joie,
 And shal, til I may sene her eft in Troie.”⁶⁴

It is a true touch of nature to make him suppose that other people were occupied with observing and pitying him :

Another time imagined he would,
 That every wight that went by the wey,
 Had of him routh, and that they saien should,
 “ I am right sory ; Troilus wol dey.”
 And thus he drove a day yet forth, or twey,
 As ye have herde. Such life gan he lede,
 As he that stode betwixen hope and drede.⁶⁵

Another action into which the poet puts him, is as natural—

And every night, as he was wont to done,
 He stode the bright moone to behold ;
 And al his sorowe he to the moone told,
 And said, “ I wis, whan thou art horned new,
 I shall be glad if al the world be trew.”

That the recollection of the changeableness of the moon should suggest to him the wish that *all* the world might not resemble it, is a fine stroke of nature, which has greater beauty when we observe the sequel of the story. Is the sentiment, that Troilus found his time so tedious, that he fancied its proper course to be retarded, unnatural ?

The day is more, and lenger every night
 Than they ben wont to be, him thought tho.
 And that the sunne went his course unright,
 By lenger way than it was wont to go.

⁶⁴ Troilus and Creseid, book 5. pp. 283, 284.

⁶⁵ Ibid. p. 284.

The next picture we may easily conceive of such an affectionate lover: CHAP.
V.

Upon the walles fast eke would he walke,
And on the Greekes host he would see;
And to himselfe right thus he would talke;
"Lo! yonder is mine owne lady free;
Or else, yonder—there the tentes bee:
And thience commeth this aire that is so soote,
That in my soule, I fele, it doth me boote."⁶⁶

LIFE AND
POEMS OF
CHAUCER.

This we may allow to love; tho the following thought, that the increasing wind was his lady's deep sighs, we must consign to the limbo of Italian conceits. But Chaucer rarely offends from this cause.

One view more may be given of the adored lady, before she is exhibited in a different scene. If Troilus was distressed for her, she was equally interested for him, and for the city, her birth-place, in which he was living:—

Full pale iwoxen was her bright face;
Her limmes leane, as she that all the day
Stode, whan she durst, and loked on the place
Where she was borne, and dwelt had aye.
And all the night weeping, "Alass," she lay;
And thus dispeired out of all cure
She lad her life, this wofull creature.
Full oft aday she sighed eke for distresse,
And in herself she went aye purtraying
Of Troilus the great worthinesse;
And all his goodly wordes recording,
Sens first that day her love began to spring.
And thus she set her woful herte afire,
Through remembrance of that she gan desire.
Full rewfully she looked upon Troy;
Beheld the toures high, and eke the hallis.
"Alass!" quod she, "the pleasaunce and the joy,
The which that now all turned into gall is,
Have I had ofte within yonder walles.

⁶⁶ Troilus and Creseid, book 5. p. 284.

BOOK
VIII.HISTORY OF
ENGLISH
POETRY.

O Troilus! what doest thou now?" she seide;
"Lord! whether thou yet thinke upon Creseide."⁶⁷

When Shakespear's tragedy-queen expressed strongly her love for her husband, it was remarked, "The lady doth protest too much, methinks;" and the satirical prince replied, "Ay, but she'll keep her word."—Shall we not be displeased with our poet, to find that Creseide violated her's? After such impressive pictures of mutual love and mutual grief at a forced separation, can we pardon him for introducing another suitor, to seduce her into an unnecessary inconstancy? So however it was—or so he has fancied, that in the Grecian camp there was a Diomed—

- - - - - Prest and courageous,
With sterne voice and mighty limmes square,
Hardy, testife, strong, and chivalrous.

And he was seized with a desire "to winnen such a floure." He sat down by her, took spices and wine with her; spoke "of this and that, as friendes done;" and then asked her for her opinions about the battles with Troy. At last, he ventured to request her to dismiss both Troy and Trojans from her heart; to make good cheer—

"And clepe ayen the beauteie of your face,
That ye with salte teares so deface."

He proceeds to assure her, that she would find in Greeks a more perfect love, and persons more kind and more bent to serve her; and having now reached the climax of his eloquence and audacity, he adds without disguise—

"And if ye vouchsafe, my lady bright!
I woll ben he, to serven you myselve;
Yea—lever than be lord of Greces twelve."

⁶⁷ Troilus and Creseid, book 5, p. 284.

DURING THE MIDDLE AGES.

24

And with that word he gan to waxen reed ;
 And in his speech a little while he quoke ;
 And cast aside a little with his heed ;
 And stint awhile, and afterward he woke ;
 And soberly on her he threw his loke,
 And said, " I am, albeit to you no joy,
 As gentill a man as any wight in Troy."

CHAUCER
V.

LIFE AND
POEMS OF
CHAUCER

It is due to the lady's reputation, to say, that she did not listen to him at first ; and as he thought that he had spoken " ynough for one day at the most," he did not press her to hear more. But on the morrow, " all freshly new againe he renewed his tale." Still she thought of Troilus. " Her glove he toke, of which he was full faine." But Troilus still conquered. At last, what fortress is impregnable to an obstinate siege ? Her constancy, her fidelity, gave way—" This sillie woman falsed Troilus"—and the rest of the poem is occupied with describing his misery and her repentance. That a lady should desert, not an unfortunate but an unworthy lover, both her virtue and her good sense would demand and justify ; but we may perhaps blame the poet as deviating a little out of nature, in making Troilus continuing to be noble, amiable, and affectionate, and yet to have been abandoned by his Creseide, merely because a new admirer urges her to be faithless. Whatever some weak women may have done, constancy has always been one of the principal virtues of their sex, and the want of it one of the greatest reproaches of ours. Chaucer had certainly a right to take the rare deformity for the subject of his poem. But to attach it to an amiable and natural character, uncaused, and contrary to her represented qualities, was converting the exception into a general example of the sex. To mark Creseide as the ano-

BOOK
VIII.HISTORY OF
ENGLISH
POETRY.

maly and not the specimen, corresponding imperfections should have pervaded her character. But these are not exhibited. Hence, as he has drawn her, the character is incongruous, and its effects injurious to the high honor of that sex—by whom the civilization of the world has in every age been most advanced; whose virtues increase and soften ours; whose manners and opinions first influence those of the rising generation; among whom benevolence has never wanted an advocate, the domestic charities affectionate examples, or religion and morals sincere and unaffected votaries.⁶⁸ It appears that the fair sex in his own time complained of his undeserved satire, and that he wrote his Legend of Good Women as an atonement.

There are some pleasing effusions in his “Assembly of Fowles.” The object of this poem is to exalt the nature of love, and to unite it with honor and constancy. Hence he conducts it so as to exhibit a contrast between the opinions of the superior and common classes of mankind upon this feeling. The passage on Dreams is begun well :

The wearie hunter sleeping in his bedde,
The wood ayen his mind goeth anone;
The judge dremeth how his plees be spedde;
The carter dremeth how his cartes gone;
The rich of gold, the knight fight with his fone;
The sicke mette he drinketh of the fonne,
The lover mette he hath his lady wonne.⁶⁹

His account of the Trees is a poetical conception, but not well finished; Milton and Pope have imitated it more successfully :—

⁶⁸ I should be ungrateful for the happiness of twenty years, and blind to the main source of the future improvement of mankind, if I could form a different judgment on this interesting subject.

⁶⁹ Assemb. of Fowles, p. 330.

The bilder oke; and eke the hardy asshe;
 The pillar elme, the coffre unto caraine;
 The boxe pipe tree; holme to wheps lasshe;
 The sailing firre; the cipres death to plaine;
 The shooter ewe; the aspe for shaftes plaine;
 The olive of peace; and eke the dronken vine;
 The victor palme; the laurer to divine.⁷⁰

He shews an eye to mark the beautiful objects of
 nature; and a heart to feel the beautiful in its true
 delight:—

A gardein saw I full of blossomed bowis
 Upon a river, in a grene mede.
 There as sweetnesse evermore inough is
 With floures white, blewe, yelow and red.
 And cold welle streames, nothing dede,
 That swommen full of small fishes light,
 With finnes rede and scales silver bright.⁷¹

A more perfect metre in the verse, and a more care-
 ful selection of phrase, would have made this a fine
 passage. The next verse is still better:—

On every bough the birdes heard I sing
With voice of angell in hir armonie.
 That busied hem hir birdes forth to bring
 The little pretty conies to her play gan hie.
 And further all about I gan espie,
 The dredful roe, the buck, the hart and hind,
 Squirrels and beastes small of gentle kind.
 Therewith a wind unneth it might be lesse
 Made in the leaves grene a noise soft
 Accordant to the foules song on loft.⁷²

His display of the different species of Birds is done
 with some original poetry, tho it would have been im-
 proved if it had been shorter, and more select:—

There was the tyrant with his feathers don
 And grene, I mean the goshawke that doth pine
 To birdes for his outrageous ravine.

⁷⁰ Assemb. of Fowles, p. 31.⁷¹ Ib.⁷² Ib.

BOOK
VIII.HISTORY OF
ENGLISH
POETRY.

The gentle faucon that with his fete distremeth
 The king's hand—the hardy sperhawke eke
 The quales foe ; the merlion that peineth
 Himself full oft the larke for to seke :
 There was the dove, with her iyen meke ;
 The jelous swan, ayenst his deth that singeth ;
 The oul eke, that of deth the bode bringeth.

The crane, the giant, with his trotnps soun ;
 The thief, the chough ; and the chattring pie ;
 The scorning jaie. The eles foe the heroune.
 The false lapwing, full of trecherie ;
 The stare that the counsaile can bewrie ;
 The tame ruddocke and the coward kite :
 The cocke, that horiloge is of thropes lite.

The sparrow, Venus' son, and the nightingale
 That cleapeth forth the fresh leaves new ;
 The swallow, murderer of the bees smale,
 That maken honie of floures fresh of hew ;
 The wedded turtell with his herte true ;
 The pecocke with his angel fethers bright ;
 The fesaunt, scorner of the cocke by night.⁷³

The descriptive traits are not equally successful, but they are mostly original. There is great delicacy in depicting the tame falcon as pressing the king's hand, that holds it gently with its claws.

It is a pretty picture which he draws of the female eagle, for whose preference three royal birds were contending :—

- - - - - Nature held on her hond
 A formell egle, of shape the gentillest
 That ever she among her workes fond.
 The most benigne and eke the goodliest.
 In her was every virtue at his rest.
 So far forth, *that Nature herself had blisse*
*To look on her, and ofte her beeke to kisse.*⁷⁴

The competition of three eagles for the favorite

⁷³ Assemb. of Fowles, p. 332.

⁷⁴ Ib. p. 333.

lady, making the rest of the feathered assembly impatient for their dismissal, the goose utters her advice to the rivals, that if she will not "love him, let him love another." The duck seconds this remark, by adding—

CHAP.
V.

LIFE AND
POEMS OF
CHAUCER.

- - - - - Full well and fair

There be mo sterres in the skie than a pair.

These opinions give occasion to Chaucer to display his high-minded sentiments on Love. To the goose he makes the turtle reply—

"Nay, God forbede a lover should chaunge,"

The turtle said, and wex for shame all red;

"Though that his lady evermore be straunge,

Yet let him serve her alway till he be deed.

Forsooth; I praise not the gooses reed.

For tho she died, I would none other make;

I will be hers, till that the death me take."

He answers the duck by the high-born eagle—

"Now, fie, churle," quod the gentle tercelet.

"Out of the dunghill came that word aright.

Thou canst not see which thing is well beset.

Thou farest by love, as owles do by light.

The day hem blindeth; full well they see by night.

Thy kind is of so low wretchedness,

That what love is, thou canst nor se nor gess."⁷⁵

In his "Complaint of the Black Knight," there is more memory, mythology, and rhetoric, than poetry or feeling; but it contains some specimens of his taste for the beauties of rural nature:—

I rose anone, and thought I would gone

Into the wodde to heare the birdes sing;

Whan that the misty vapour was agone,

And cleare and faire was the morning,

The dewe also, like silver in shining

Upon the leaves as any baume swete."⁷⁶

⁷⁵ Assemb. of Fowles, p. 334.

⁷⁶ Compl. Black Knight, p. 338.

BOOK
VIII.HISTORY OF
ENGLISH
POETRY.He meets with a spring of water, which he calls a
well—

The gravel, gold; the water, pure as glasse;
 The bankes round, the well environyng;
 And soft as velvet the yong grasse
 That thereupon lustely came springyng.
 The sute of trees about compassyng
 Hir shadow cast⁷⁷ - - - - -

In his Dream on the death of Blanche, he tells us, that being sleepless, he took a romance “to rede and drive the night away.” It was the story of Ceyx and Alcoine. The book brought on the sleep he wanted, and he fancies that it was accompanied by a dream. He begins with describing a morning hunt:—

My windowes weren shut echone;
 And through the glasse the sunne shone
 Upon my bed with bright bemes,
 With many glad, glidy stremes;
 And eke the welkin was so faire.
 Blew, bright, clere was the aire
 And full attempted, sooth it was,
 For neyther too cold ne hote it nas,
 Ne in all the welkin was no cloud.
 And as I lay thus, wonder loud
 Methought I heard a hunter blow
 T’ assay his great horne, and for to know
 Whether it was clere or horse of sowne;
 And I heard going both up and downe,
 Men, horse, hounds and other thing;
 And all men speake of hunting,
 How they would slee the hart with strength.

I was right glad, and up anone
 Tooke my horse, and forth I went
 Out of my chamber. I never stent
 Till I came to the field without,
 There overtooke I a great rout

⁷⁷ Compl. Black Knight, p. 338.

Of hunters, and eke forresters,
 And many relaies and limers.
 They highed hem to the forrest fast :
 And I with hem - - - - -
 Whan we come to the forrest side,
 Every man did right soone
 As to hunting fell to done.

CHAP.
 V.

LIFE AND
 POEMS OF
 CHAUCER.

The maister hunter anone fote-hote
 With his horne blew three mote,
 At the uncoupling of his houndis :
 Within a while the hart found is.
 I hallowed ; and rechased fast ;
 Long time ; and so at the last
 This hart roused, and stale away
 Fro all the hounds a previe way.
 The hounds had overshot him all,
 And were upon a default yfall.
 Therewith the hunter, wonder fast
 Blew a forloyn at the last.⁷⁸

The object of his Dream is to introduce a knight in black, whom he found in the forest mourning under an oak. This personage is intended to be John of Gaunt, the well-known duke of Lancaster, lamenting the loss of his lady, Blanche. The grief of the widowed knight is loquacious and learned, but has so little connexion with nature, and so little adapted to awaken the feelings of its readers, that we might let it sleep undisturbed in the natural oblivion of antiquity, but that some few passages display the true genius of Chaucer, and claim to be rescued from the fate of the rest. Chaucer is never more himself than in describing an interesting female, and thus he portrays the lamented Blanche :—

I sawe her daunce so comely,
 Carol and sing so sweetly,
 Laugh and play so womanly,

⁷⁸ Dream, p. 322.

BOOK
VIII.HISTORY OF
ENGLISH
POETRY.

And looke so debonairly,
 So goody speke, and so friendly;
 That certes I trowe that evermore
 Nas sene so blisful a tresore.
 For every heer on her head,
 Sothe to say it was not red;
 Ne neither yelow, ne browne it nas;
 Methought most like gold it was.
 And which eyen my lady had,
 Debonnaire, good, glad and sad—
 It nas no counterfeited thing,
 It was her own pure loking.
 That the goddesse, dame Nature
 Had made hem open by measure
 And close; for were she never so glad,
 Her looking was not folish sprad,
 Ne widely, though that she plaid,
 But ever me-thought her eyen said
 By God, my wrath is all forgive.—

But many one with her loken she hurte;
 And that sate her full litel at herte,
 For she knew nothing of their thought;
 But whether she knew or knew it nought,
 Algate she ne rought of them a stree,
 To get her love no nere nas he;
 That woned at home, than he in Inde.

So greet a thing for to devise
 I have not wit that can suffice
 To comprehend her beaute.
 But thus much I dare sain, that she
 Was white, rody, fresh and lifely hewed;
And every day her beaute newed.
 And nigh her face was alderbest;
 For certes, Nature had such lest
 To make that faire, that truly she
 Was her chief patron of beaute.
 - - - - *For it be never so derke,*
Methinketh I see her ever mo.
 And yet, moreover, though all tho
 That ever lived, were now alive,
 Ne would have found they to describe

In all her face a wicked signe,
For it was sad, simple, and benigne.—

I say not that she ne had knowyng
What harme was, or else she
Had con'd no good, so thinketh me—

And I dare saine and swere it wele,
That Trough himself, over al and al,
Had chose her manor principal
In her, that was his resting place.”

The knight or duke's description of the first disclosure of his love is interesting to us, as well for its poetical merit as for its picture of the manners of the day on these occasions—

- - - - - Upon a day
I bethought me what wo
And sorowe that I suffred tho
For her, and yet she wist it nought ;
Ne tell her, durst I not, my thought.
Alas ! thought I, I can no rede ;
And but I tel her I am dede.
And if I tel her, to say right soth,
I am adradde she woll be wroth.
Alas ! what shall I than do ?
In this debat I was so wo,
Methought mine herte brast atwain ;
So at the last, sothe for to saine,
I bethought me that nature
Ne formed never in creature
So much beauty trewly,
And bounty without mercy.

In hope of that, my tale I tolde—
I no't well how that I began—
For many a word I overskipt
In my tale, for pure fere,
Lest my wordes misse set were—
Full oft I wexte both pale and red ;
Bowing to her, I hung my head ;

⁷⁹ Dream, pp. 326, 327.

BOOK
VIII.HISTORY OF
ENGLISH
POETRY.

I durst not ones looke her on,
For wit, manner, and all, was gone.
I said, "Mercy,"—and no more.
It nas no gaine. It sate me sore.

So at the last, soth to saine,
Whan that mine herte was com againe,
To tell her shortly all my speech,
With hole herte, I gan her beseech,
That she wolde be my lady swete,
And swore, and hertely gan her hete,
Ever to be stedfast and trewe;
And love her alway freshly newe;
And never other lady have,
And all her worship for to save.
As I best coude, I sware her this,
"For yours, is all that ever there is;
For evermore; mine herte swete!
And never to false you; but I mete
I nyl; as wise God help me so."

And whan I had my tale ydo,
God wote, she accompted not a stre
Of al my tale, so thought me.—
Trewly her answer—it was this—
I cannot now well counterfete
Her wordes. But this was the grete
Of her answer. She said, 'Nay.'
All, utterly! Alass, that day!
The sorow I suffered and the wo!
I durst no more say thereto,
For pure feere; but stale away.
And thus I lived full many a day,
That trewly I had no need,
Ferther than my beddes heed,
Never a day to seeke sorrow,
I found it ready every morrow.
For why? I loved in no gere.

So it befel another yeer.
I thought ones I would fonde
To doe her know, and understonde
My wo. And she well understood
That I ne wilned thing but good,

And worship ; and to keepe her name,
Over all things, and drede her shame,
And was so busie her to serve.⁸⁰

CHAP
V.

LIFE AND
POEMS OF
CHAUCER.

He proceeds to say, that when his lady knew all this, she gave him "the noble gift of her mercy," and a ring. He describes himself as then becoming "the gladdest and the most at rest," of all men.

In his *FLOWER AND THE LEAF*, we read the effusions of a mind deeply captivated by the charms of rural nature, and artlessly communicating the pleasures he experiences. A path of little breadth, "that greatly had not used been," and so "far grown with grass and weed" that "a wight" might with difficulty see it, leads him to a pleasant arbour,

That benched was, and with turfes new
Freshly turned, whereof the greene grass
So small, so thicke, so fresh of hew,

was surrounded "with sicamour and eglantere." It was so shaped,

That who that lest without to stond or go,
Tho he would all day prien to and fro,
He should not see, if there was any wight
Within or no ;— - - - -

yet those within the arbour might perceive all that moved

In the field that was on every side
Covered with corn and grasse—

Having brought us here, he says of himself,

Thought sodainly I felt so sweet an aire
Of the eglantere, that certainly
There is no herte I deme in such dispaire,
Ne with thoughts froward and contraire
So overlaid, but it should soone have bote,
If it had once felt this savour sote.

⁸⁰ Dream, p 329.

BOOK
VIII.HISTORY OF
ENGLISH
POETRY.

And as I stood, and cast aside mine eie,
 I was ware of the fairest medle tree
 That ever yet in all my life I sie,
 As full of blossomes as it might be.
 Therein a goldfinch, leaping prettyle
 Fro bough to bough, and as him lest, he eat
 Here and there, of buds and floures sweet.

This playful visitant began to sing, and as he ended,

The nightingale with so merry a note
 Answered him, that all the wood rong
 So sodainly, that as it were a sote
 I stood astonied ; so was I with the song
 Thorow ravished, that till late and long
 I ne wist in what place I was, ne where.

He discovered the melodious charmer at last upon
 a laurel-tree ; and he was so enchanted, that he de-
 sired to go no farther that day :—

- - - - And on the sweet grass
 I sat me downe ; for, as for mine entent,
 The birds song was more convenient,
 And more pleasaunt to me by manifold
 Than meat or drinke, or any other thing—

But this was not all his enjoyment. Other grati-
 fications were approaching him, which he describes
 with great spirit :—

And as I sat the birds harkening thus,
 Methought that I heard voices sodainly ;
 The most sweetest and most delicious,
 That ever any wight I trow truly
 Heard in their life, for the armony
 And sweet accord was in so good musike,
 That the voice to angels most was like.

At the last, out of a grove even by,
 That was right goodly, and pleasant to sight,
 I sie, where there came singing lustily
 A world of ladies ; but to tell aright
 Their great beauty, it lieth not in my might.

In surcotes white of velvet wele sitting
 They were yclad, and the semes echone
 Was set with emerauds, one and one
 By and by, but many a rich stone
 Was set on the purples, out of dout,
 Of colours, sleeves and traines round about.

Every lady had

----- on her head
 A rich fret of gold, which, without dread,
 Was full of stately rich stones set;
 And every lady had a chapelet
 On her head of fresh and grene—
 Some of laurel and some full pleasauntly
 Had chaplets of woodbind; and sadly
 Some of agnus castus were also.—

This delightful party “all followed the pace”
 of one, “whose heavenly-figured face” and well-
 shaped person, far surpassed them all:

And she began a roundell lustely—
 And then the Company answered all
 With voices sweet entuned, and so small
 That, methought it the sweetest melody
 That ever I heard in my life soothly.
 And thus they came, dauncing and singing,
 Into the middest of the mede echone
 Before the herber where I was sitting—

But suddenly the poet changes the actors of his
 scene, and exerts his descriptive powers in a con-
 rasted picture:—

They had not daunced but a little throw
 Whan that I heard not ferre off, sodainly,
 So great a noise of thundring trumpets blow,
 As though it should have de-parted the skie.
 And after that, within a while, I sie,
 Froth the same grove where the ladies come out,
 Of men of armes, comming such a rout,
 As all the men on earth had been assembled
 In that place, well horsed for the nones,
 Stering so fast, that all the earth trembled.

The first that appeared were in white clokes, with fresh chaplets of oak, and trumpets, and "on every trumpe hanging a broad banere." After them issued kings of armes "in clokes of white cloth of gold," with "chaplets of greene on their heads on hie:" And

The crowns that they on their scochones bere
Were set with pearle, ruby, and saphere.

Heralds and pursuivants followed in white velvet:

Next after hem came, in armour bright,
All, save their heads, seemely knightes nine.
And every claspe and naile, as to my sight,
Of their harnies, were of red gold fine.
With cloth of gold, and furred with ermine
Were the trappers of their stedes strong,
Wide and large, that to the ground did hong.

Every knight was attended with three henshmen ;
one carrying his helmet, another his shield, the third
"upright, a mighty spere."

And so they came, their horses freshly stering,
With bloody sownes of hir trompes loud—
And at the last, as evenly as they coud
They took their places in middes of the mede,
And every knight turned his horses hede
To his fellow, and lightly laid a spere
In the reste, and so justes began,
On every part about, here and there :
Some brake his spere ; some drew down hors and man.
About the field, astray, the steeds ran :
And to behold their rule and governaunce
I you ensure it was a great pleasaunce.⁸¹

The Prologue to his Canterbury Tales is one of the finest specimens of the pourtraiture of character and persons that the English language possesses ;⁸² and some of his Tales display a power of poetical

⁸¹ Flower and Leaf, 395-397.

⁸² Mr. Todd has printed this, with valuable notes, in his *Illustrations*.

narration, which all may envy, and which few will ever equal.⁸³ Dryden and Pope have made some of the best of these familiar to the British public. Yet as specimens of Chaucer's latest and most improved style, we may cite the picture of his Young Squire, and the Yeoman, as representing two large portions of his contemporaries, with some traits of his Prioress, his Monk, and Friar . . .

CHAP.
V.

LIFE AND
POEMS OF
CHAUCER.

Young SQUIRE:—

Embrouded was he, as it were a mede,
Alle ful of freshe floures, white and rede.
Singing he was, or floyting alle the day.
He was as fresh, as is the moneth of May.
Short was his goune, with sleves long and wide.
Wel coude he sitte on hors, and fayre ride.
He coude songes make, and wel endite:
Juste and eke dance, and wel pourtraie, and write.
Curteis he was, lowly, and servisable,
And carf before his fader at the table.

Prol. Cant. Tales, p. 4.

The YEOMAN:—

- - - He was cladde in cote and hode of grene;
A shefe of peacock arwes bright and kene,
Under his belt he bare ful thriftily.
Wel coude he dresse his takel yemanly:
His arwes drouped not with fetheres lowe;
And in his hond he bare a mighty bowe.—Ib. p. 4.

The PRIORESS:—

Ther was also a nonne, a Prioressse,
That of hire smiling was ful simple and coy;
Hire greatest othe n'as but by seint Eloy;
And she was cleped, madame Eglentine.
Ful wel she sange the service devine,
Entuned in hire nose ful swetely:
And Frenche she spake ful fayre and fetisly;
After the scole of Stratford atte Bowe,
For Frenche of Paris was to hire unknowe.

⁸³ Mr. Tyrwhit has published these separately from Chaucer's other works, with one of the best accounts of the poet, prefixed,

BOOK
VIII.HISTORY OF
ENGLISH
POETRY.

At mete was she wel ytaughte withalle ;
 She lette no morsel from hire lippes falle,
 Ne wette hire fingres in hire sauce depe.
 Wel coude she carie a morsel, and wel kepe.

- - - - -
 And sikerly she was of grete disport
 And ful plesant, and amiable of port.
 She was so charitable, and so pitous,
 She wolde wepe if that she saw a mous
 Caughte in a trappe, if it were ded, or bledde.
 Of smale houndes hadde she, that she fedde
 With rosted flesh, and milk, and wastel brede :
 But sore wept she if on of hem were dede,
 Or if men smote it with a yerde smert :
 And all was conscience and tendre herte.

Pro! Cant. Tales, p.

The MONK :—

A manly man ; to ben an abbot able.
 Full many a deinte hors hadde he in stable.
 And whan he rode, men mighte his bridel here
 Gingeling in a whistling wind, as clere
 And eke as loude, as doth the chapell belle.

- - - - -
 He yave not of the text a pulled hen
 That saith that hunters ben not holy men,
 Ne that a monk when he is rekkeles
 Is like a fish that is waterles.
 This is to say a monk out of his cloistre
 This ilke text held he not worth an oistre.

- - - - -
 I saw his sleeves purfild at the hond
 With gris, and that the finest of the lond.
 And for to fasten his hood under his chinne,
 He hadde of gold ywrought a curious pinne :
 A love-knotte in the greter end ther was.
 His hed was balled, and shone as any glas,
 And eke his face, as it hadde been anoint.
 He was a lord ful fat and in good point.
 His eyen stepe, and nothing in his hed.

- - - - -
 He was not pale as a forpined gost.
 A fat swan loved he best of any rost.—Ib. p. 4.

The FRIAR:—

Ful wel beloved, and familiar was he
With frankleins over all in his contree;
And eke with worthy wimmen of the toun:
For he had power of confession.

— — — — —
He was an easy man to give penance,
There as he wiste to han a good pittance.

— — — — —
His tippet was ay farsed full of knives,
And pinnes, for to given fayre wives.
And certainly he had a mery note,
Wel coude he singe and plaien on a rote.

— — — — —
His nekke was white as is the flour de lis.
Thereto he strong was as a champioun,
And knew wel the tavernes in every toun,
And every hosteler and gay tapstere,
Better than a lazer or a beggere;
For unto swiche a worthy man as he,
Accordeth nought, as by his faculte,
To haven with sike lazars acquaintance,
It is not honest, it may not advance.

— — — — —
Curteis he was, and lowly of servise.
Ther n'as no man no wher so vertuous.
He was tha beste begger in all his hous.

— — — — —
Somewhat he lisped for his wantonnesse,
To make his English swete upon his tonge;
And in his harping, whan that he hadde songe,
His eyen twinkeled in his hed aright,
As don the sterres in a frosty night. —Ib. p. 5.

To these we shall only add his portrait of Emily, which Dryden has so much improved; and of Arcite in his grief; the simile of Arcite's meeting with Palamon for deadly combat, and an extract from their final battle.

EMILY:—

- - - Emelie that fayrer was to sene
Than is the lilie upon his stalke grene,

BOOK
VIII.HISTORY OF
ENGLISH
POETRY.

And fresher than the May with floures newe,
 For with the rose colour strouf hire hewe.
 I no't which was the finer of hem two.
 Er it was day, as she was wont to do,
 She was arisen, and al redy dight—
 Hire yelwe here was broided in a tresse,
 Behind hire back, a yerde longe I gesse.
 And in the gardin at the sonne uprest,
 She walketh up and down whenas hire lest.
 She gathereth floures, partie white and red,
 To make a sotel gerlond for hire hed;
 And as an angel hevenlich she song.

Prol. Cant. Tales, p. 11.

ARCITE:—

Ful oft a day he swelt, and said, 'Alas!'
 For sen his lady shall he never mo—
 His slepe, his mete, his drinke is him byraft;
 That lene he wex, and drie as is a shaft.
 His eyen holwe, and grisly to behold,
 His hewe falwe, and pale as ashen cold.
 And solitary he was, and ever alone,
 And wailing all the night, making his mone.
 And if he herde song, or instrument,
 Than wolde he wepe, he might not be stent,
 So feble were his spirites and so low.—Ib. p. 13.

SIMILE:—

And in the grove, at time and place ysette,
 This Arcite and this Palamon ben mette.
 Tho changen gan the colour of hir face;
 Right as the hunter in the regne of Trace,
 That stondesth at a gappe with a spere,
 Whan hunted is the lion or the bere;
 And hereth him come rushing in the greves,
 And breking bothe the boughes and the leues;
 And thinketh, here cometh my mortal enemy—
 Withouten faille, he must be ded or I.—Ib. p. 15.

BATTLE:—

The heraudes left hir priking up and down.
 Now ringen trompes loud and clarioun.
 Ther is no more to say, but est and west,
 In gon the speres sadly in the rest;

In goth the sharpe spere into the side :
 Ther see men who can juste, and who can ride :
 Ther shiveren shaftes upon sheldes thicke ;
 He feleth thurgh the herte sponne the pricke.
 Up springen speres twenty foot on highte ;
 Out gon the swerdes as the silver brighte.
 The helmes they to-hewen, and to-shrede ;
 Out brest the blod, with sterne stremes rede.
 With mighty maces the bones they to-breste.
 He thurgh the thickest of the throng gan threste
 Ther stomblen stedes strong, and down goth all ;
 He rolleth under foot as doth a ball.—Ib. p. 22.

CHAP.
V.

LIFE AND
POEMS OF
CHAUCER.

is but rarely that we find Chaucer deviating
 absurdity; yet he has occasionally a conceit,⁸⁴
 a thought both false and extravagant.⁸⁵

⁸⁴ Thus—

For who so seeth me first on morrow,
 May saine, he hath met with sorrow ;
 For I am sorrow, and sorrow is I.—Chauc. Dream, p. 324.

We should scarcely have expected from Chaucer so wild an

Of instruments of stringes in accord,
 Heard I so play a ravishing sweetnesse,
 That God, that maker is of all, and Lord,
 Ne heard never better, as I gesse.

Assemb. of Fowles, p. 331.

Among many passages like these which have been
 , Chaucer abounds with others that are prosaic,
 interesting, and tedious. But to quote the wear-
 ised dulness of any author would be useless, either
 story or criticism. All writers are at times un-
 to themselves. Every work, like every prospect,
 its lights and shadows, its beauties and its de-
 ficiencies. But the interesting parts are those which
 enliven the minds and feelings of their fellow-crea-
 . Their dulnesses are disliked as fast as they are
 lived; are soon forgotten, and become obsolete;

BOOK
VIII.HISTORY OF
ENGLISH
POETRY.

while the brighter passages command the attention, impress the memory, affect the sensibilities, and excite the imitation of their readers. Genius gives them the wings with which they fly to distant regions, and thro successive periods, producing every where a fond admiration and a congenial offspring. The beauties of a great author shew the cultivated excellencies both of his own mind, and of that of his contemporaries. For, as his dulness represents the general level of the age as he found it, his beauties, diffusing themselves among his countrymen, raise their intellectual improvements to the elevation of his own. The successful passages of every author are therefore those, which mark the true literary rank and progress of the country. They are the mirrors which have reflected the lights that have enabled us to perceive their accompanying defects. No man would present "Love's labour lost" as a just specimen of Shakspear, or cite the free-will debates and psalms of Milton, to represent the mind and powers of his majestic epopée.

But the modern reader, improved by the accessions of thought and knowlege which the English mind has obtained during the four centuries that have elapsed since Chaucer's death, cannot peruse his works without perceiving the fewness and the defects of the mental and moral associations which they contain. He wanted Gower's knowlege and ethical taste, as much as Gower wanted his command of language and poetical power. Or rather, the English intellect, weak on its first emerging from ignorance, superstition, and verbal logic, was only beginning to be original, and to think philosophically on life and nature. Hence the puerile reflections and versified inanity which both Gower and Chaucer frequently display. In the

passages where Chaucer dramatises the manners of his day, or carries the voice of nature to the heart, or exhibits his characters and incidents as if passing in living motion before us, he produces an interest which neither the little feeblenesses that even here intermingle themselves, nor their unpruned prolixity, can destroy; but beyond these, he, like Gower, is dull, unmeaning now, and unreadable. Few poets have written so much, which so few desire to peruse or attempt to disturb. With several of the natural powers of Shakspear, he had not Shakspear's moral taste or sensibility, his abundant yet classical fancy, or his intellectual amplitude, vigor, or aspiring sublimity. In Shakspear, the philosopher is inseparable from the poet; the Homer and the Socrates are scarcely ever disunited. In Shakspear, the sublime and eagle-eyed observer of life and manners, ever meditating as well as painting, so profusely blends his instruction with his poetry, so instinctively reasons as well as feels, that the most persuasive lessons of virtue and honor—a complete code of ethical rules, both for the great and little morals of life—and in example as well as precept, may be drawn from his works.* But in all Chaucer's poems,

* I have been surprised at hearing some sensible men object to a family Shakspear. I do not know how the one published under that title has been executed; but altho we should always chuse to have the whole of Shakspear in our library, to contemplate the poet at full length, yet surely a selection from his works, retaining all that is now interesting and useful, and omitting that which we have outlived, would be a desirable acquisition to every man of taste. Indeed, I never look at Mr. Chalmers' edition of the Poets, without thinking that if some capacious, truly feeling, and correctly judging mind, were to select from all our poets those parts which, from their interest, beauty, or usefulness, are qualified to be the delight and the property of all ages, the fame of our poetry, and the intellect and character of our countrymen, would be greatly enhanced. As they now appear, with all their sins, dulnesses and incumbrances on their heads, and in full and wearisome display, the works of most of them might as well be reposing with their authors in the tomb. The public seem inclined to disturb the one as little as the other. The oblivious decree will only become more irreversible as time passes on.

BOOK
VIII.HISTORY OF
ENGLISH
POETRY.

except his last, he has few characters but knights and lovers. His sentiments are usually those of a fantastic gallantry; and this fashion of life, so unlike the real affection of persons of intellect and genuine nature, having long since become obsolete, the reading popularity of Chaucer has departed with it. Chaucer rather felt love as the man of fashion in the fourteenth century, than as the man of nature of every age and clime. He was the poetical rhetorician of knight-errantry, more than the true and unaffected lover. Hence, tho the loss of Shakspear would be a subtraction from the general intellect of mankind, the loss of the bulk of Chaucer's writings would be little more than the oblivion of some of the long-passed manners and overstrained feelings of his day. But with all this deduction, he has many parts which, especially when combined with the excellencies of Dryden's mind and style, neither the poet nor the critic will in any age suffer to be forgotten.

It is but justice to Chaucer to notice the high estimation with which his contemporaries regarded him. John the Chaplain calls him 'Flour of rhetorik.' Occleve laments him as his dear master and father, and styles him 'the honour of English tongue; floure of eloquence; mirror of fructuous entendment; universal fadre of science.' Lydgate, who also styles him 'my maister,' calls him 'chiefe poet of Britaine; the loadsterre of our language; the notable rhetore;' adding, tho with much confusion of metaphor,—

That made first to distill and raine,
The gold dew drops of speech and eloquence;
Into our tongue thro his excellence.

And found the floures first of rethoricke,
Our rude speech only to enlumine,
That in our tongue was never none him like:
For as the sunne doth in heaven shine,
In midday spere down to us by line,
In whose presence no sterre may appeare,
Right so his ditties withouten any peare.

Lydgate's Troy.

CHAP. VI.

*The Works of JOHN the Chaplain, OCCLEVE,
and LYDGATE.*

THREE Poets of considerable importance to the improvement of the English heroic verse, and to its establishment in our higher style of poetry, distinguished the reign of Henry IV.; and the last of these surviving also his successor—John the Chaplain, Occleve, and Lydgate—their works deserve our consideration.

CHAP.
VI.

The first of these is known to us by his translation of Boetius into English verse. Alfred had made an Anglo-Saxon version of it, and Chaucer attempted one in English prose. John aspired to give it a poetical dress, and has completed his task in such a manner, as to prove that he contributed something to the strength and rithm of our heroic versification. He begins with this address to his patron :—

JOHN the
Chaplain.

In suffissaunce of cunnyng and of wyt,
Default of language and of eloquence,
This work fro me schuld have withholden yit,
Bot that yowre hest hath done me violence:
That nedis most I do my diligence,
In thyng that passeth myn abilite;
Beseching to youre noble excellence,
That be your help it may amended be.

And certayn I have tasted wonder lyte
Al of the welles of Calliope;
No wonder though I sympilly endite.
Yitt will I not unto Tessiphone,

BOOK
VIII.HISTORY OF
ENGLISH
POETRY.

Ne to Allecto, ne to Megare;
Besechin after craft of eloquence.
But pray that God of his benignyte
My spirit enspire with his influence.¹

What we may term his invocation, is thus expressed :—

So help me with HIS inspiration,
That is of wisdom both the lock and key !
As from the text, that I ne vary nought,
But keep the sentence in his true intent ;
And words eke all as nigh as may be braght,
Where law of metre is not resistent.
This matter which that is so excellent,
And passeth both my cunning and my might,
So save it, LORD ! in thy governement,
That canst reform all thing to right.

Of his undertaking, he says :—

I have heard speak, and somewhat have I seen
Of divers men that, wonder subtilly,
In metre some, and some in prose playne
This book translated have full sufficiently
Into English tongue, word for word well nigh.
But I must use the wittes that I have,
Tho I may not do so, yet not for thy,
With help of God, the sentence shall I save.

To Chaucer, that is flower of rhetoric
In English tongue, an excellent poete,
This wot I well ; no thing may I do like,
Tho so that I, of making entermete.
And Gower, that so craftily doth treat ;
As in his book of morality.
Tho I to rime in making am unmeet,
Yet must I shew it forth that is in me.

¹ MS. Bib. Reg. 18. A 13. Its date, inserted at the end, is 1410. *The* MS. mentioned by Mr. Todd in his *Illustrations*, Introd. p. xxxi, has, *at* the end, the author's name ; ' per Capellanum Johannem Tebaud, *alias* Watyrbeche.'

To **TRUTH** that art the will of sapience.
 Almighty Lord! this labour I commit.
 Tho I be far from craft of eloquence.
 Enforce I have my cunning and my wit.
 This matter far to treaten, so that it
 Be to **TRUTH** honour and to **TRUTH** pleasure.
 So take it **LORD**! unto **TRUTH** governance.

CHAP.
VI.

WORKS OF
JOHN THE
CHAPELAIN,
OCCLEVE,
AND
SPENCER.

The work contains above 9000 lines. It is heavy in verse, because its original is so in prose: but it exhibits a greater proportion of good heroic rhythm, sometimes stately and energetic, than Chaucer's poems in this style. There is somewhat of a modern air, both in phrase and metre, in these lines on the *Deity*, from his preface to the fourth and fifth books:—

Who was His wit, when He this world began.
 Or who was he that was His counsellor?
 When nothing was, who was that got Him then.
 To whom He is in danger or detour?
 Of Hym is all, for He is creature.
 Be Hym it is that all thing is susteyned.
 In Hym is all thyng kindly conteyned.
 Lo! of so hve a metre fit to mete.
 As after this myn anour docti pursue.
 This wote I well, my wyntes ben sumete.
 The sentence far to sei it metre trewe.²

It may be regretted, that a writer who had attained at that period such a command of heroic versification, did not select a more interesting subject for the display of his poetical talent.

Another poet, who has not had his just share of reputation, is THOMAS OCCLEVE, whose compositions greatly assisted the growth and diffused the popularity of our infant poetry. He wrote his principal poems³ in the reign of Henry IV. and chiefly for the use of the prince, afterwards Henry V. to whom he

² MS. Bib. Reg. 18, A 13.

³ They are in MS. in the British Museum, Bib. Reg. 17, D 6. The verses of this author, printed by Mason, are his least interesting productions.

BOOK
VIII.HISTORY OF
ENGLISH
POETRY.

addresses them.⁴ He calls Chaucer his father and his master, and affectionately and repeatedly laments him.⁵

He also notices Gower.⁶

Occleve frequently applies his poetry to record his feelings, and in so doing gave it a direction to one of its highest sources of excellence. The reader may be pleased to peruse some passages that have never been quoted in the histories of our poetry:—

This ilke nyght I walked to and fro;
Seekyng rest, but certainly she
Appered not. But thought, my cruel foo,
Chaced had hir and slepe away fro me.
So longe a nyght ne felt I never none
As was that same to my juggement.
Who so that thoughty is, he is wo begone.
The thouhtful wight is vessell of turment;
There is no grief to hym equipolent.
He gravest depest of sikenesses alle;
Full wo is hym that in such caas is falle.

⁴ See before, pp. 385, 6, 7, of our 2d volume. Passages from this author will also be found in the same vol. at pp. 236. 268. 277.

⁵ Besides the passages already noticed, he thus mentions both Chaucer and himself:—

‘What shall I call thee? What is thy name?’
‘OCCLEVE, fadyr myne! men callen me.’
‘Occleve, sone!’—‘Y wis, fadyr, the same.’
‘Sone! I herd er this men speke of the,
‘Thou were acqueynted with Chaucer. Parde!
‘God save his soule.’—MS. 17. D 6.

In another part he calls him

The first fynder of our faire langage.

And exclaims—

Alass! my fader fro the world is go.

My worthy maister Chaucer, hym I mene.

Be thou advocate for hym, Heven Quene!—MS. ib.

He draws his picture on one side of his poem, and invokes the Virgin Mary to favor him:—

In thyne honor he wrote full many a stile.
O now thyne helpe and thy promocion!
To God thy sone make a mocion
How he thy saint was. Maide Marie!
And lete his soule floure and fructifie.—MS. ib.

⁶ In his apostrophe to Death, he adds—

Hast thou not eke maister Gower slayn?
Whos vertu I am insufficient
For to describe - - - - - MS. ib.

CHAP.
VI.WORKS OF
JOHN THE
CHAPELAIN,
OCCLEVE,
AND
LYDGATE.

Passe over whan thys stormy nyght was gone,
 And day gan at my wyndowe in to prie;
 I rose me up; for bote fonde I none
 In myne unresty bedde lenger to lie.
 Into the fields I dressed me on hie,
 And in my woful hert deepe gan wade,
 As he that was bareyn of thoughtes glade.
 By that I walked hade a certeyn tyme,
 Were it an houre, I note more or lesse,
 A poore, olde, hore man came walkyng by me
 And seide, ' Good day, Sire, and God you blesse.'
 But I no word—for my sickly distresse
 Forbade myn eres usen her office.
 For which this olde man held me lewde and nice.
 Stil he toke heede to my dreery cheere,
 And to my dedely coldness, pale and wan.
 Than thought he thus. ' This man that I see here,
 All wrong is wreft, by ought that I see kan.'
 He stert unto me and seide, ' Slepest thu man!
 Awake!' and he gan me shake wonderfaste,
 And with a sighe I answered at the laste;
 ' Ah! who is there?'—' I,'—quod the olde grey,
 ' Am here'—and me tolde he the manere
 How he spake to me, as ye herd me say.
 ' O man,' quoth I, ' for Christes love dere,
 Yf thou wilt ought done at my prayere,
 Ah! go thy way. Talke to me no more,
 Thy werdes all anoyeth me full sore.
 ' Avoyde fro me. Me liste no companye.
 Encrece not my grief. I have ynow.'
 ' My son, haste thy gode luste, thy sorowe drye,
 And mayst releved be.'—' What man art thou?'
 ' Wreke after me. It shall be for thy prowre,
 Thou art but yonge and hast but litell seen,
 And full selde is that yonge folk wise ben.'⁷

After this introduction, they begin conversing on
 many subjects of life and manners. Occleve tells
 him, that the king, Henry IV. had given him an

⁷ MS. Bib. Reg. 17. D 6.

BOOK annuity in the exchequer of twenty marcs a year, but
VIII. he complains that he could not get it paid—

HISTORY OF
ENGLISH
POETRY.

‘ Myght I ay paide be of that duetee,
It shuld stond wel ynough with me.
But paiement is hard to gete now adayes,
And that me putte in many foule affrays.
It goth full strait and sharpe or I it have—
This hevieth me, so that I wel nye sterue.’⁸

Occleve then narrates, that he resided in the office of the privy seal; that it was his custom to write there, and he had been there twenty-four years. He says, that besides his annuity, he had only six marcs a year: he complains that this is full little; and curiously describes how unfit he is to pursue other occupations to increase it:

‘ Six mark yerely, and no more but that,
Fader, to me methynketh is full lite;
Consideryng, how that I am not
In husbandrie not lerned worth a myte:
Scarsly knowe I to chace away the kyte,
That me bereve wold my polaile:
And more axeth husbondely governaile.
‘ With plough kan I not medle, ne with harewe.
Ne wote not what lond goode is for what corne:
And for to lade a carte or fille a barewe,
To which I never used was aforne,
My back unbuxom hathe suche thyng forsworne.’⁹

He informs his old companion of the peculiar labor which writing is—

‘ Many men, fadir, wenen that writyng
No travaille is. They holde it but a game—
‘ A writer mote thre thynges to hym knitte,
And in tho may be no disseveraunce.
Mynde, eye; and hond. None may from other flitte,
But in hym mote be joynte continuaunce.
The mynde all hole, withoute variaunce,
On eye and honde, awaite mote alway,
And they two eke. On hym it is no nay.

⁸ MS. Bib. Reg. 17. D 6.

⁹ MS. ib.

'These artificers see I, day by day,
 In the hottest of all her besynesse,
 Talken and syng, and make game and play,
 And forth her labour passeth with gladnesse.
 But we labouren in travaillous stilnesse ;
 We stoupe and stare upon the shepe skyn;
 And kepe most our songe and our wordes in.'¹⁰

CHAP.
VI.

WORKS OF
 JOHN THE
 CHAPLAIN,
 OCCLEVE,
 AND
 LYDGATE.

The old man's description of his way of living in his youth, may be cited as an interesting picture of the manners of the day :—

'Whan I was yonge I was full recheles ;
 Proud, nyce and ryotous for the maystrye.
 And amonge other, conscienceless.
 By that sette I not the worth of a flye.
 And of hem haunted I the companye
 That went on pilgernage to taverne,
 Which before unthrift bereth the lanterne.
 'Whan folk wel-reuled dressed hem to bedde,
 In tyme due by rede of nature,
 To the taverne quykly I me spedde,
 And pleide at dyce while the night wold endure.
 Thoo myght I spende an hundred mark by yere,
 All thyng quytte, my sone, I gabbe nought.
 I was so proude I had no man my peere.
 In pride and lecherie was all my thought.'¹¹

He adds a contrast of his present forlorn state :—

'Gold, silver, jewell, cloth, beddyng, aray—
 Ne have I none other than thow maist see.
 Parde. This olde russett is not gay.
 And in my purs so grete sommes be
 That there nys counter in all Cristente.
 'Come hedre, my sone, and loke whether
 In this purs there be ony crosse or crouche.
 Save nedle and threde and thymell of lether,
 Here seest thou nought that man may handell or touche.
 The fiende, men sayn, may hoppe in a pouche
 Whan that no crosse therein may appear ;
 And by my purs the same ye may sey here—

¹⁰ MS. Bib. Reg. 17. D 6.¹¹ MS. ib.

BOOK
VIII.STORY OF
ENGLISH
POETRY.

' And where ben my gownes of scarlet ;
Sangewyn, murrey, and blewes sadde and light.
Grenes also, and the faire vyolet—
Hors and harneys fressh and lusty in sight—
My wikked lyfe hath putte all this to flight.'¹²

From Occleve's account, in another work, of his youthful prodigality, it may be suspected that the account of the old man's youth was in fact the description of his own. His poem on Government was written for the instruction of Henry V. when he was a prince. His tales are not unworthy of notice.¹³

LYDGATE.

LYDGATE, a monk of the Benedictine abbey at Bury, is another of our ancient poets who has been oftener abused than read. As voluminous as Don Lopez de Vega, and often as dull as the worst-natured critics have not been displeased to find him; yet he abounds with passages that are either curious for their relation of manners, or for their true poetical feeling, or for the vigor and harmony of their versification. In this latter quality he is superior to Chaucer, and sometimes approaches him in his higher merit.¹⁴ He has not Chaucer's felicity in selecting,

¹² MS. Bib. Reg. 17. D 6. Some other poems of this author have been published by Mr. Mason in 1796, who calls him, from the spelling in MS. 'Hoccleve.'

¹³ One of these is long, but is not, in some parts, unpleasantly told. An emperor, going to the Holy Land, makes his brother regent. He tries to seduce the empress. She informed some nobles of it, and he was imprisoned. The emperor returning, he affected to repent, and she released him. But one day he got into a forest, and on her persisting in her virtuous resistance, he hanged her on a tree, and accused her fidelity to her husband. But an earl found her, and a discovery of the truth ensues. Amid some prose, occurs another moral tale. MS. 17. D 6.

¹⁴ Lydgate was not born later than 1375, and he lived above fifty years. The most complete enumeration of his works is in Mr. Ritson's *Bibliotheca Poetica*, as well as the most angry abuse of him. That he was a monk, was a sin great enough to excite the bile of this irritable and prejudiced, but valuable antiquary.

nor his facility or spirit in describing, the characterising traits of the events which he exhibits; but he has sometimes a greater condensation of expression, if not of thought, and in general better rithm in his versification.

One of the passages that deserve to be cited from Lydgate, from its connexion with the manners of the age, is the poet's description of his own youth, in his Testament.¹⁵ In the prologue to his "Storie of

CHAP.
VI.

WORKS OF
JOHN THE
CHAPLAIN,
ECCLEVE,
AND
LYDGATE.

¹⁵ This picture of himself has hitherto escaped notice:—

Voyde of reason; gyven to wilfulnes,
Frowarde to vertue; of Christ gave letell hede.
Loth to lerne; lovede no vertuous besynes,
Save play or myrth. Straunge to spell or rede;
Folowyng all appetitis longyng to childhede;
Lightlye tournynge; wild and selde sadde;
Wepinge for nought, and anone after gladd.

For lytel werth to stryve with my felawe,
As my passyons dyd my brydell lede;
Of the yarde stode I sometyme in awe;
To be scoured, that was all my drede.
Lothe toworde scole; lost my time indede;
Lyke a yonge colt that raune without bridell,
Made my frendes gyve goode to spende in ydell.

I had in custom to come to scole late;
Not for to lerne, but for a countenance.
With my felawes redy to debate;
To jangle and jape was sett all my pleasaunce.
Whereof rebuked, this was my cheusaunce,
To forge a lesyng and thereupon to muse
Whan I trespassed, myself to excuse.

To my better dyd no reverence,
Of my soveraynes gave no force at all,
Well obstynat by inobedience;
Ranne into gardeyns, appels there I stale,
To gather frutes spared hedge nor wall;
To plucke grapes on other mennys vynes,
Was more redy than for to saye mattyns.

My lust was alway to scorne folke and gape,
Shrewede tournes ever amonge to use.
To scoffe and mowe like a wanton ape
Whan I dyd evyll other I dyd abuse.
Redyer cheristones for to tell
Than go to churche or here the sacrynge bell.

BOOK
VIII.HISTORY OF
ENGLISH
POETRY.

Thebes," he briefly delineates himself in his maturer age.¹⁶ His "Siege of Troy," he says, began at the command of Henry V. in the last year of his father's reign, or in 1413; and he completed it in 1420.¹⁷ Some lines in this poem shew that criticism had begun; for he expresses great sensibility about it, and solicits candor and favorable judgment. He remarks, that Chaucer did not suffer it to disturb him, but pursued his compositions, saying always his best.¹⁸

Lothe to ryse, lother to bed at eve;
With unwashe hondes redy to dynner,
My paternoster, my crede, or my beleve,
Last at the looke. Lo this was my maner.
Warred with eche wynde as doth a rede spere.
Snobbed of my frendes such tatches to amende,
Made deffe eare—list not to them attende.—
My port, my pase, my fote, alway unstable;
My loke, myn eyen, unsure and vacabounde.
In all my werkes sodeynly chaungeable.
To all goode thewes contrary was I founde.
Now oversad; nowe mournyng; now jocounde.
Wilful; recheles; madd; startyng as a hare:
To folowe my luste, for no thyng wolde I spare.

Lydg. Test. MS. Bib. Reg. 18. D 11—

¹⁶ He says he travelled to visit the town—

In a cosse of blacke and not of grene,
On a palfray slender, long slene
With rusty bridle made not for the sale;
My man to foine with a void male.

He went 'by fortune' to the inn where Chaucer's pilgrims had lodged :
The host there addresses him with

'Ye be welcome newly into Kent
Thogh your bridle have nother hoos ne bell.
Beseeching you, that ye will tell
First of your name and what countre
Without more, shortly, that ye be
That looke so pale, all devoid of blood.
Upon your head a wonder threadbare hood
Well arrayed for to ride late.'

I answered,
- - - 'My name was Lidgate,
Monke of Burie, nie fifty yere of age.'

Prol. Siege of Thebes.

¹⁷ Lydgate's Siege of Troy.

¹⁸ My master Chaucer that founde ful many spot,
Hym lyste not gruche, nor pynche at every blot :
Nor move himself to parturbe his reste;
I have herde tolde, but seyde alway the beste.—Lydg. Troy.

It is also obvious that the public ear was in his time becoming scrupulous as to the correct metre of heroic verse, for he attempts an apology for his own defects on this point.¹⁹ A few extracts from his *Storie of Thebes* will shew his style and power of poetical narration.

CHAP.
VI.

WORKS OF
JOHN THE
CHAPLAIN
OCCLEVE,
AND
LYDGATE.

He thus describes a battle:—

As Greekes pressen to enter the cite,
They of Thebes in her crueltie
With hem mette, full furious and wood.
And mortally as they againe hem stood,
Men might see speres shiver asonder;
That to behold, it was a very wonder
How they foine with daggers and with swerdes:
Thorough the viser ayming at berds,
Persing also through the round mailles;
Rent out peeces of her aventailles,
That nought availeth the mighty Gesseran,
Through neck and breast that the speres ran.
Her weapons were so sharpe ground and whet,
In their armour that they were not let.
For ther lay one troden under foot,
And yonder one perced to the heart root.
Here lieth one dead, and there another lame.
This was the play and the mortall game
Atweene Thebans and the Greekes proud;
That the swoughs and the cries loud
Of hem that lay and yolden up the ghost,
Was heard full ferre about in many a cost.²⁰

He sometimes expresses his sentiments with a high and dignified feeling:—

And they that were most manly and wise,
Shortly saied it were a cowardise,
The high emprise that they have undertake,
For dred of death so sodainly to forsake.

¹⁹ For well I wote, moche thinge is wronge;
False metrede, both of short and longe.—Lydg. Troy.

²⁰ Siege of Thebes, Speght's ed. p. 373.

BOOK
VIII.HISTORY OF
ENGLISH
POETRY.

It were to hem perpetually a shame,
And after hindring to the Greke's name.
And better it were to every warreour,
Manly to die with worship and honour,
Than like a coward with the life endure.
For ones shamed, hard is to recure
His name ayein, of what estate he bee.²¹

His picture of the besieged Thebans, and of their
surrounding enemies, has some spirit:

Men of armes all the night walking
On the walles, by bidding of the king,
Lest there were traine or treason.
And on the toures and in the chief dongeon
He set men to make mortalle sownes,
With brasen hornes and loud clariounes,
Of full entent the watches for to kepe,
In his warde that no man ne slepe.
And Grekes proudly all the long night
Kindled fires and made full great light.²²

He thus represents a knight and a serpent:—

The worthy knight Parthonolope
Was the first that happed for to se
This hideous serpent by a river side,
Great and horrible, sterne and full of pride,
Under a rocke by a banke lowe ;
And in all hast he bent a sturdy bowe,
And therein set an arrow filed kene,
And through the body spotted blewe and grene,
Full mightily he made it for to glide.²³

News was brought to Lygurgus that his son was
killed—

- - - - Sodainly the importable smart
Ran anon and hent him by the hart—
The rage gan mine on him so depe,
That he could not but sobbe sigh and wepe ;
And with the noise and lamentacioun,
The quene distraught is descended doun.

²¹ Siege of Thebes, Speght's ed. p. 372.

²² Ib. p. 370.

²³ Ib. p. 369.

And when she knew the ground of all this sorrow,
 It needed her no teares for to borrow.
 But twenty time upon a row
 Aswound she fell to the earth low.
 And stoundmell for this mischaunce,
 Still as a stone she lieth in a traunce.
 But when the child into court was brought,
 Tofore Lygurgus—alass—I wite hem nought
 Upon the corps, with a mortal face
 He felt at ones, and gan it to embrace,
 Sore to grispe, and again up stert.²⁴

CHAP.
VI.

WORKS OF
JOHN THE
CHAPLAIN,
OCCLEVE,
AND
LYDGATE.

He gives a new circumstance in his description of
 he sufferings of the army of Tydeus, from thirst:—

They nother found well ne rivere
 Hem to refresh, nor water that was clere;
 That they, alas! no refute ne conne,
 So importable was the shene sonne,
 So hote on hem in foulds where they ley,
 That for mischeefe men and horse they dey;
 Gaping full dry upward into the south:
 And sum putten her swerdes in her mouth,
 And speare heads, in story as it is told,
 T' assuage her thurst with the yron cold.²⁵

Forgetting all chronology, he makes Etheocles
 plant the walls with canon:

Round about he set many gonnes
 Great and small, and some large as tonnes.

Tydeus, wounded, enters a garden; and there

He laied him downe for to make his rest—
 There he lay till the larke song
 With notes new, high up in the aire;
 The glad morrow rodie, and right faire;
 Phebus also casting up his beames,
 The high hills gilt with his streames;
 The silver dew upon the hearbes round.²⁶

Lydgate now introduces the princess:—

And every morrow, for holesomnes of aire,
 Lygurgus doughter did make her repaire

²⁴ Siege of Thebes, Speght's ed. p. 369. ²⁵ Ib. p. 367. ²⁶ Ib. p. 364.

BOOK
VIII.HISTORY OF
ENGLISH
POETRY.

Of custome aye among the floures new,
In the garden of many a divers hew;
Such joy had she for to take hede,
On her stalkes for to seene hem sprede,
In the alures walking to and fro.
And when she had a little while go,
Her selfe alone casting up her sight,
She beheld where an armed knight
Lay to rest him on the hearbes cold;
And him beside she gan eke behold
His mighty stede walking here and there.²⁷

Her approach to Tydeus is picturesque—

And forth she goeth and touchest him soft.
Where as he lay, with her honds smale;
And with a face deadly bleike and pale,
Like as a man adawed in a swough,
He up stert and his sword drough,
Not fully out, but put it up again
Anone as he hath the lady seine.²⁸

His description of Tydeus, affronted with the address of Etheocles, is very characteristic:—

Whan Tideus had his message saied—
As he that list no longer there sojourne,
Fro the king he gan his face tourne,
Not astonied, nor in his heart aferde,
But full proudely layed hond on his swerde;
And in despite who was lefe or loth,
A stern pace through the hall he goth
Through the court, and manly took his stede.²⁹

That Lydgate's Thebes and Troy are generally dull, is perhaps more the fault of the poet's subjects than of his talent. In these, he has entered those mythological regions, in which all modern poets, as well as their readers, invariably contract a fatal lethargy. The classical writers of Greece and Rome,

²⁷ Siege of Thebes, Speght's ed. p. 364.

²⁸ Ib

²⁹ Ib. p. 363. Mr. Warton's account of Lydgate deserves perusal and praise.

having given to this obsolete period definite characters and manners, fancy finds itself circumscribed. The most attainable beauties have been anticipated. Modern genius can only imitate and translate. Every incident comes to us with the wearisomeness of a thrice-told tale. Every character reminds us of superior pictures with which in our juvenile studies we have been delighted and pre-occupied. Our prejudice combines with our taste to dwell with rapture on our first impressions, and to dislike beforehand the author, who must either copy or distort them. Chaucer has made Troilus interesting only by forgetting the Trojan, and making him a loving knight of the court of Edward the Third. But even Chaucer cannot reconcile us to absurdity. Lydgate has erred in the same manner : and hence the admired Cresseid of his master, as well as his own Destruction of Troy and Siege of Thebes, will perhaps hereafter live only in the pages of the historian, or on the shelves of the antiquary.

Of the Scottish bards about this period, Andrew of Wyntoun,³⁰ James the First,³¹ Henry the Minstrel,³² and the elegant William Dunbar,³³ deserve and will reward the perusal of the curious.

CHAP.
VI.

WORKS OF
JOHN THE
CHAPLAIN,
OCCLEVE,
AND
LYDGATE.

³⁰ He flourished about 1400. His 'Orygynale Cronykel of Scotland' was published in 1795, by Mr. Macpherson.

³¹ See his elegant 'King's Quaire,' in Ellis's Specimens, vol. 1. p. 299. He was born 1395.

³² Or 'Blind Harry.' He wrote, about 1446, the Metrical History of Sir William Wallace, containing much fable, but also occasionally some true poetry. It was printed at Perth, 1790.

³³ 'The greatest poet that Scotland ever produced,' was born about 1365. See Ellis, p. 377. In this sketch of the History of our Poetry, I have purposely avoided all minute details and discussions, and whatever preceding writers have published. My object has been to select, as far as I could, such circumstances and passages, which, not having yet been quoted or observed, may be new to the general reader, and may at the same time satisfactorily mark the course and progress of the poetical mind of the country. By this plan, I endeavor to avoid repeating to

BOOK
VIII.HISTORY OF
ENGLISH
POETRY.

Several writers of verse, pretending to be poetry, exerted their intellectual ingenuity in England, in various compositions, to the contentment of themselves and of their contemporaries, between the accession of Edward IV. and the death of Henry VII. Their subjects were most usually connected with those of our chronicles, or with saints, scripture history, and religious morality; and their chief good effect may have been, besides the amusement and occasional information which they conveyed to their readers in their humble, but then not unpleasing works, that by their perpetual practice, they softened down and diminished that ruggedness and imperfection of English verse, which both Chaucer and Lydgate too frequently exhibit, and tuned the public ear to a nicer taste for verbal harmony, and to desire a more improved rithm in the syllables of the words chosen for each line, as well as more exactness of consonancy in the ending rimes.

Bradshaw.

The style of HENRY BRADSHAW, a Benedictine monk, who before 1500 composed the Life of Saint Werburgh in English verse, shews much of these advancing improvements. In describing her father, king Wulfer's royal feast, he gives us, what we may deem, intimations of the costumes of the banquets in his own times under Henry VII.

All herbs and flowers; fragrant, fair, and sweet,
Were strewed in halls, and laid under their feet.
Cloths of gold and arras were hanged in the hall,
Depainted with pictures and histories manifold,
Well-wrought and craftily, with precious stones, all
Glittering as Phœbus; and the beaten gold
Like an earthly paradise, pleasant to behold.

the public what it already possesses, and to give a more connected and concise view of the principal features of our poetical history. To the intelligent and laborious antiquaries and inquirers who have preceded me on this subject, I refer the reader for fuller circumstantial detail.

After copiously describing the subjects of the pictures and the tapestry on the walls, he adds,—

CHAP.
VI.

WORKS OF
JOHN THE
CHAPLAIN,
OCCLEVE,
LYDGATE,
ETC.

The tables were covered with cloths of diaper,
Richly enlarged with silver and with gold ;
The cupboard with plate shining fair and clear.
Marshals their offices fulfilled manifold.
Of mighty wine plenty, both new and old.
All manner kind of meates delectate,
When grace was said, to them was prepareate.

To this noble feast there was such ordinance,
That nothing wanted that gotten might be
On sea and on land ; but there was abundance
Of all manner pleasures to be had for money.
The bordes all charged full of meat plenty ;
And divers subtleties prepared soothly were
With cordial and spices, their guests for to chere.

The joyful words and sweet communication
Spoken at the table, it were hard to tell.
Each man at liberty ; without interruption ;
Both sadness and mirth ; also privy counsel.
Some, adulation ; some, the truth did tell.
But the Great Estates spake of their regions ;
Knights of their chivalry ; of crafts, the Commons.

Certain, at each course of service in the hall,
Trumpets blew up, shalmes and clarions ;
Shewing their melody with tones musical.
Divers other minstrels, in crafty proportions,
Made sweet concordance, and lusty divisions.
An heavenly pleasure such harmony to hear !
Rejoicing the hearts of the audience full clear !

A singular minstrel, all other far passing,
Tuned his instrument in pleasant harmony ;
And sang most sweetly, the company gladdening,
Of mighty conquerors the famous victory ;
Wherewith was ravished their sprites and memory ;
Specially he sang of the great Alexander ;
Of his triumphs and honors enduring twelve year.

BOOK
VIII.HISTORY OF
ENGLISH
POETRY.

- - - - -

All these histories, noble and ancient,
Rejoicing the audience, he sang with pleasure ;
And many more of the New Testament,
Pleasant and profitable for their soul's cure.
The ministers were ready their office to fulfil,
To take up the tables at their Lord's will.³⁴

Tho he says, 'To describe high histories, I dare not be so bold,' yet he declares his resolution to avoid all such poetry as he thought unseemly and discreditable.³⁵

Of the other poets or poetasters who intervened before the accession of Henry VIII. the notices given by Dr. Warton will satisfy the more inquisitive inquirer. But of all those after Lydgate, whose names or manuscripts have survived the usual consumption of time, the most distinguished would have been that of ROWLEY, if the veracity and fidelity of CHATTERTON had been equal to his talents and industry.

This youth of genius has given to himself a melancholy, but not an enshrining immortality, by publishing poems of great merit, both in their matter and in their versification, as the genuine works of a Bristol author, until that time unknown, of the name of Thomas Rowley, to the consideration of which the next chapter will be devoted.

On quitting this interesting branch of our subject, we may remark, that to the poets who have been enumerated in these pages, we are indebted for the superior character of our national poetry. They

³⁴ This piece was first printed by Pinson in 1521, from whose edition Warton has quoted the above stanzas, with others. *Hist. Poet.* v. 3. p. 17-23. The author died in 1513.

³⁵ 'As for bawdy ballads, you shall have none of me
To excite light hearts to pleasure and vanity.' Wart. 24.

formed its versification and its style. They trained the English mind to love its vernacular muses, and to cultivate them. They pointed out the most interesting regions for their excursions, and opened some of the treasures that were attainable. They soon produced an emulous crowd of admirers and imitators. Mind rapidly catches fire from mind, and spreads the useful flame wherever communication can reach. Nature having implanted in the human breast, not only a preferring taste for excellence the moment it becomes visible, but also an insuppressible desire for something better than what we actually enjoy, no species of intellectual improvement can be stationary; it may migrate, but it is indestructible. Sensual habits, or brutish politics, may drive it from any one community, as they have from Athens and Alexandria; but it moves, to flourish with more abundant vigour in newer soils. Not that every country is alike adapted to its vegetation. But England, from her happy political constitution, has always been a region congenial to the growth of every intellectual good. Hence poetry and literature, from their first buddings in our islands, have never ceased to advance, and are still in their progress. It would be a violence to our nature to make them retrograde. We all feel that no possessed luxury, of either the mind or the body, can satisfy us. The acquisition of one comfort, either in life or literature, is but a stimulus to obtain others. The demand for excellence increases with its attainment. Whatever progress we may make, our censorial judgments of each other require us to become something still better, or reproach us for the defects which we do not remove. Our literary, like our moral

CHAP.
VI.

WORKS OF
JOHN THE
CHAPLAIN,
OCCLEVE,
LYDGATE,
ETC.

critics, are never wholly satisfied. The brighter parts of the most successful writer, like the greater virtues of the best public character, make the watching world less tolerant of his imperfections, and more discriminating as to their existence. We pardon fewer faults, that is, we exact more continued merit, than our ancestors were contented with. The satirized censoriousness and restlessness of man are indications of the homage which he pays to that ideal beauty, to that ideal good, which, tho he never finds, he cannot forbear to search for. All that we acquire becomes inferior to our wish; we believe it to be unequal to our powers of attaining. The capacity of every man exceeds his success, both in his own opinion and in that of his critics, and also of his legislators; for no laws are made, either in political or literary parliaments, but with the belief that they can, as well as ought, to be obeyed. But the truth is, that every improvement makes further improvement more necessary, as well as more delightful and accessible. With all Shakspear's or Milton's constellations of merit, we cannot limit our poetical banquet to their productions. As Chaucer became dissatisfied with Gower, and twice, at least, censures him³⁶, we have long since become dissatisfied with Chaucer; and by the aid of the very lights which they have given us, we have passed far beyond both. Man is so constituted as to be discontented with every good and every merit that he possesses, in order that he may be constantly increasing them. The spell of dissatisfaction is placed upon the human heart, that no inferior excellence, no present advantage, may

³⁶ In the Prologue to his Testament of Love, p. 466; and in the *Man of Lawe's* Prologue, p. 36.

content an intellect, which is created to be a candidate for companionship with absolute perfection. By the operation of this law, our mortal nature and its faculties are always on the advance. Hence, rich and varied as our Parnassus has become, and beautiful and sublime as are many of its productions, they are but the pledges of a still nobler vegetation, of a still superior culture. If the mind cannot be stationary, its works will not fail to partake of its progression, unless improvement ceases to be the principle which its intellectual teachers or aspirants respect or pursue. The course and results of nature are appointed, and act to urge them to this end; nor can any do otherwise, but to their own disadvantage. One invariable moral law of our present system of things is, that evil shall produce the consequences and the pains of evil; and that all good shall have good results in some respect or other. These are the insuppressible tendencies of all the physical, animal, moral and mental organizations and agencies around us, which no power, art or sophistry can avert or prevent. Whoever loves a durable fame must therefore base it on virtue, religion, or philanthropy. As far as the vicious, the fantastic, or the useless prevails in his writings or in his actions, he darkens and curtails his future reputation. Mankind never knowingly or willingly immortalize the pernicious. Accident may give it a temporary revival, but nature and reason are ever steadily operating to consign to oblivion and to contempt, whatever injures, affronts, or deteriorates us.³⁷

CHAP.
VI.

WORKS OF
JOHN THE
CHAPLAIN,
OCCLEVE,
LYNGATE,
ETC.

³⁷ As the Franciscans greatly improved the mind, knowledge and literature of England, during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the poetical taste of their founder, St. Francis, deserves our recollection. He has left us a specimen of this in his celebrated hymn, called his Cantico del Sole, which Fra. Pacifico, one of his companions, and dis-

BOOK
VIII.HISTORY OF
ENGLISH
POETRY.

tinguished as a musician, set to music. It has also a claim to attention from the possibility, that as Milton may have heard and known it during his residence in Italy, it may have contributed to suggest his own noble ode to the Deity, 'These are Thy glorious Works, Pare Good!' which is indeed but a resemblance or imitation of the St. Francis, by a larger mind, and by a superior genius.

HYMN OF ST. FRANCIS.

HIGHEST OF LORDS!
 THINE are the praises,
 The glory, and all honors!
 And to THEE alone must be referred
 Every grace and beauty.
 No mortal is worthy
 To commemorate THEE.
 Be thou lauded and exalted, O! God
 And my Lord! by all THY creatures,
 And especially by the sublime SUN;
 Your work, O Sovereign! whose presence
 Gives light and lustre to the day.
 In his beauty and in his splendor
 He is the image of THYSELF.
 May the fair moon and beauteous stars
 Hail THEE for creating them,
 So brilliant and so charming in the heaven!
 Be THOU praised, Great King! by the fire
 Which illuminates our nights
 In their darkness;
 For THOU hast made it resplendent,
 Cheerful, gay, beautiful and active.
 May the air hymn THEE,
 The winds, and the serene sky;
 Its clouds and all its seasons,
 Which animate with life and joy,
 Every creature here below!
 Praised be THOU, my LORD, by the water,
 Lowly, pure and bright.
 Praised be my Sovereign,
 By our mother earth,
 Who produces, feeds and nurtures
 Such rich diversity
 Of herbs, fruits and flowers!
 May all those bless THEE,
 Who love and forgive;
 Who endure their labors with patience,
 And their afflictions with joy.
 Be THOU praised for that bodily death
 Which no living mortal
 Can hope to escape.
 May THY grace extend to those
 Who are dying in mortal sin!
 And happy indeed in their last hour
 Will those be found, who, by THINE aid,
 Have obeyed THY most holy will!

For they will not have to see
 The second death;
 The everlasting puna.
 Praise HIM; thank my LORD;
 Be grateful to HIM, and serve HIM,
 O! all ye creatures of His power,
 And perform it with the humility,
 Which you ought ever to exhibit.

CHAP.
 VI.

WORDS OF
 SOME THE
 CHAPLAIN,
 QUEEN,
 LYONARD,
 ETC.

It may gratify some to add the original Italian, which *Cervantes* found in the chronicles of the order, written as prose, but which he has printed according to its poetical rhythm.

ALTISSIMO SIGNORE!
 Vostre sono le lodi,
 La gloria, e gli onori!
 Ed a Voi solo s' hanno a riferire
 Tutte le grazie. E nessun uomo è
 Degno di nominarvi.
 Siete laudato, Dio! ed esaltato,
 Signore mio! da tutte le creature;
 Ed in particolar dal sommo SOLE,
 Vostra fattura, Signore! il qual fa
 Chiaro il giorno che c' illumina;
 Onde per sua bellezza e suo splendore,
 Egli è Vostra figura.
 E dalla bianca Luna e vaghe stelle,
 Da Voi nel ciel create
 Così lucenti e belle.
 Laudato sia il mio Signor pe' fuoco,
 Da cui la notte viene illuminata
 Nel tenebre sue;
 Perchè egli è risplendente,
 Allegro, bello, vago e vigoroso.
 Laudato sia il mio Signor dall' aere,
 Da i venti, e dal sereno;
 Dal nuvolo, e da tutti
 Gli altri tempi, pe' quali
 Vivono tutte queste
 Altre basse creature.
 Laudato sia il mio Signor per l' acqua
 Elemento utilissimo a mortale
 Umile, casta e chiara.
 Laudato sia il mio Signor per la nostra
 Madre terra; la quale
 Ci sostiene e nutrice col produrre
 Tanta diversità
 D' erbe, di fiori e frutti.
 Laudato sia il mio Signor per quelli
 Che perdonan per suo
 Amore, e che sopportano i travagli
 Con pazienza; e l' infermità
 Con allegrezza di spirito.
 Laudato sia il mio Signor
 Per la morte corporale

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RY.

HISTORY OF ENGLAND,

Dalla qual nessun uomo
Vivente puo fuggire.
Grazia a quelli che moriono in peccato
Mortale; e beati quelli
Che all' ora della morte
Si troveranno nella Vostra grazia
Per aver' ubbidito
Alla Vostra santissima volontà;
Perchè non' vederanno
La seconda morte
Delle pene eterne.
Laudate e rendite
Grazie al mio Signor e siategli grati,
E servitelo, voi tutte creature!
Con quella umiltà che voi dovete.
Crescimbeni Comm. Poet. 1. p. 9-41.
Chron. ord. Fran. c. 92. p. 155.

CHAP. VII.

On the Poems ascribed to THOMAS ROWLEY, a priest of Bristol, in the reign of EDWARD IV. by THOMAS CHATTERTON.

BETWEEN the summer of 1768 and 1770, several poems were successively produced at Bristol by Thomas Chatterton, an attorney's articled clerk in that city; and shewn or given by him to several persons, as the compositions of an author until that time unknown in the literary history of England; and whom he described to be Thomas Rowley, the friend of sir William Canynge, an ancient mayor and merchant of this great commercial place.

CHAP.
VII.

They were alleged by him to be part of a collection of MSS. found in an old chest in a room over the north porch of Redcliffe church in Bristol, which he had received from his mother, who was using them for thread-papers, patterns and dolls, when he observed their value, and took them into his own keeping.¹ They did not attract much notice in the short time he lived after making them public; but his unfortunate self-destruction having excited both a general sympathy and much curiosity, the poems were afterwards collected and published,² and a very earnest

¹ Wm. Smith's statement in Bryant, v. 2. p. 528; and Chatt. Works, v. 3. p. 484.

² In 1777, by Mr. Tyrhwhit, with a preface and introductory account of them. This was 'the first attempt of publishing collectively the pieces attributed to Rowley.' Chatt. v. 3. p. 528. It contained the three Eclogues; Elenoure and Juga; the Tournament; the Song to Ælla; the death of Sir Charles Bawdin; the tragedies of Ælla and Godwin; the two parts of the Battle of Hastings; on our Ladies Church; the Storie of William Canynge, and a few others.

BOOK
VIII.HISTORY OF
ENGLISH
POETRY.

and interesting controversy arose between some of the most distinguished critics and authors living at that time, as to their genuineness.³ The nature of the discussion, and the different opinions into which able men of both sides inclined, entitle the subject to a brief consideration in our present History, to elicit, if possible, the most probable truth on a subject so contested and so interesting to the history of our national literature.

That there had been an ancient chest, called the cofre of Mr. Canynge, kept in some part of Redcliffe church; that it was opened on a search for title deeds by the direction of the vestry in 1727,⁴ and that many old parchments were, in 1749, seen lying about in the north porch, which the sexton at that time thought to be of some value, are facts sufficiently authenticated.⁵ After this period many were taken away, and Chatterton's father, who was nephew of the sexton, and a singing man in the cathedral, and who became sexton himself of that parish, and master of a free school in it, carried away a large basket full of these MSS. and cut up some to cover bibles with.⁶

³ The chief opposers were Mr. Warton, Horace Walpole, and Herbert Crofts. Their leading defenders were Jacob Bryant, Dr. Milles, Mr. Mickle and Mr. Matthias. All these gentlemen published their different arguments and conclusions, with much ability, research, candor and good temper. The work of the latter is a very neat summary of the whole dispute.

⁴ See Mr. Bryant's account in his *Observations on Rowley's Poems*, v. 3. p. 508-512. Some other chests there, were at the same time examined.

⁵ Mr. Shiercliffe told Mr. Bryant, that the sexton, Perrot, then shewed him the north porch where the parchments lay: 'He saw them in heaps; some quite loose, some tied up, covered with dust. They looked rumpled, stained and torn, and very much marked with age.' Perrot said, 'that there were things here which would one day be better known, and that in proper hands they might prove a treasure.' *ib.* 513.

⁶ Bryant, p. 514, 515. He made a drinking catch for three voices, which is printed in *Chatt.* v. 3. p. 495. Gardiner, who knew him, describes him as 'a complete master of the theory and practice of music, and fond of reading.' *ib.* p. 523.

They came into his possession in 1750,⁷ and remained with him until his death, when his widow removed the residue to her own house,⁸ where she used many of them for the family purposes already alluded to.⁹ There was not at that time any idea in the family, or elsewhere, that they contained any literary compositions.

CHAP.
VII.

POEMS OF
CHATTERTON.

THOMAS CHATTERTON was born 20th November 1752, a few months after his father's death.¹⁰ His sister describes him, at the age of five years, as then discovering "a thirst for pre-eminence, and making his playmates act as his hired servants."¹¹ He was dull in learning to read. He had been put to school to his father's successor, but was sent back as incapable of instruction.¹² Knowing but few letters at four years old, he was taught the alphabet at home by his mother and sister, from the initial capitals of an old music book of his father's, which his mother was tearing up for waste-paper,¹³ and afterwards out of a black-letter Testament.¹⁴ In his eighth year he was sent to the Blue-coat charity school at Bristol, and was kept there till the summer of 1767, very closely and uniformly confined.¹⁵ But while here, in his tenth year, he applied the little pocket money allowed him by his mother to hire books from a circulating library; and by his twelfth year, had read seventy volumes, chiefly history and divinity. He

⁷ His daughter, Mrs. Newton, Chatterton's sister, says, in her letter, in 1802, 'My father received the parchments in 1750.' *Chatt. Works*, v. 3. p. 525.

⁸ Bryant, 515.

⁹ W. Smith's Account. *Chatt.* v. 3. p. 484.

¹⁰ Bryant, p. 519.

¹¹ His sister's letter of 22 Sept. 1778, to Rev. Herbert Croft. 3 *Chatt.* p. 459.

¹² Bryant, p. 519.

¹³ Sister's letter, p. 460; Bryant, p. 519.

¹⁴ Bryant, p. 520.

¹⁵ Bryant, p. 520. He was placed there in October, 1760, and left it 1 July 1767. *ib.* 519. At this school, 'nothing more was taught than reading, writing and accounts.' *Tyrrhwit's Preface*, p. vii.

BOOK
VIII.HISTORY OF
ENGLISH
POETRY.

usually gave his play hours to these studies¹⁶—an impressive indication that a superior intelligence of mind was already budding within him.

A peculiar circumstance at this school both fostered his growing mind, and excited it to poetical composition. The usher there was attached to history and to the muse, and wrote verses, which appeared in the periodicals of the day.¹⁷ The elder boys attempted to imitate their teacher; and Chatterton, while there, made verses on the last day, paraphrased the ninth chapter of Job, and some chapters in Isaiah.¹⁸ In his fifteenth year he was articled to an attorney at Bristol,¹⁹ where he was boarded; and up to that period was distinguished for his veracity.²⁰

It was in the next year that he made the discovery to which he owes all his celebrity, and apparently, from his misuse of it, his ruin. He had completed his fifteenth year, when, on a short visit to his mother, his eye was caught by the writing on one of her parchment thread-papers; and upon his asking her whence it came, she mentioned the manuscripts she had removed from his father's school, and shewed him the box which contained what remained. He examined its contents; thought them to be of value; was in an ecstasy of joy at the discovery; took some away with him, and when he could get leave from

¹⁶ Sister's letter, p. 460.

¹⁷ Thistlethwaite's statement, who was a scholar there. 3 Chatt. 467.

¹⁸ Sister's letter, 461. She adds, 'He had been gloomy from the time he began to learn; but we remarked that he was more cheerful after he began to write poetry. We saw some satirical pieces soon after.' Ib.

¹⁹ On 1 July 1767. Sister's Lett.

²⁰ His sister affirms, 'He was a lover of truth from the earliest dawn of reason; and nothing would move him so much as being belied. When in the school, we were informed by the usher that his master depended upon his veracity on all occasions.' 3 Chatt. 461.

his master, returned to carry off the rest to his office.²¹ He then began to form some plan for his future life, connected with these documents, and 'would often speak in great raptures of its undoubted success.'²² This was in his sixteenth year. He went himself to the room in Redcliffe church, where he found a few more manuscripts.²³ He was at that time writing several pieces, both in prose and verse, which were then printed in the public journals.²⁴

CHAP.
VII.
POEMS OF
CHATTER-
TON.

In his legal situation he was frequently not occupied by its business above two hours in the day; he had therefore abundant leisure for his intellectual improvement or composition.²⁵ He appeared to be so employed. He rose early, and went late to his bed;²⁶ but on most evenings passed the hour from nine to ten at his mother's. There he would frequently say, that he found he studied best toward the full of the moon, and often sat up all night, writing by the moonlight.²⁷ His morning studies may have been given to the inspection of his old MSS.; but moonlight writing could only be original composition. The beams of this pleasing luminary would never be sufficient to enable him to decipher antiquated parchment in a small and difficult handwriting. He was therefore manifestly penning the effusions of his own genius at these hours; as he was at others employed upon his Redcliffe manuscripts. After he had obtained these, he brought occasionally to his maternal home what he said he had transcribed from them, and read it to his sister with a visible pleasure, and

²¹ His mother's and sister's account to Mr. Bryant, p. 521. 'The mother had put the MSS. in a large box under a bed, in which situation they were found by her son.' *ib.* 518. ²² Sister's Lett. p. 462.

²³ Matthias's Essay on the Evidence, p. 17.

²⁴ Thistlethwaite, 3 Chatt. 470.

²⁵ Matthias, p. 16.

²⁶ His Sister's Lett. p. 463.

²⁷ Sister's Lett. 463.

BOOK
VIII.HISTORY OF
ENGLISH
POETRY.

was angry with her for not enjoying it as he did. He always spoke of these remains to his family as the works of Rowley, a poet of Bristol.²⁸

Thus it is satisfactorily ascertained, that in 1768, in his sixteenth year, he had obtained a number of ancient MSS. from the Redcliffe chests and tower, which gratified him, from which he professed to transcribe poems which he read to his family as those of Rowley; and that he was also then engaged in original composition, as well as in copying and deciphering his old parchments. He recited to his family sometimes his own pieces as well as the others, but always at that time distinguished the one from the other. 'He always mentioned the poems which he copied, as Rowley's. He uniformly spoke of them as ancient, and treated them with a kind of veneration. Tho he was well satisfied with his own verses, yet he seemed to treat those of Rowley with a different regard.'²⁹ Coming at one time unexpectedly upon him at his master's office, which was half a mile from his mother's, his sister once saw him copying from one of the parchments he had carried away.³⁰ He is stated, by a young schoolfellow, to have mentioned to him that he was in possession of some old MSS. which had been deposited in a chest in Redcliffe church, and had lent one to their poetical usher:³¹ but

²⁸ Her account to Bryant, in his *Observations*, p. 521, 522.

²⁹ *Ib.* 522.

³⁰ *Ib.* 522.

³¹ Thistlethwaite's account, p. 468, who adds, 'Within a day or two after this, I saw Phillips (the usher), and repeated to him the information I had received from Chatterton. Phillips produced a MS. on parchment or vellum. As the writing was yellow and pale, and consequently difficult to decipher, Phillips had, with his pen, traced over several of the lines, and by that means labored to obtain their meaning. I endeavored to assist him, but, from an almost total ignorance of the characters, manners, language and orthography of the age in which the lines were written, all our efforts were unprofitably exerted; and altho we arrived

with this exception, he had not mentioned them to any one, except his mother and sister, till the spring of that year, 1768, when the first intimation from himself of any communication of them to others, authentically appears in a letter from himself to Mr. Baker, at Charlestown in America, in which he sends some verses of his own to his friend on the lady he was addressing, and the *TOURNAMENT*, as a fragment of a poem, of which the remainder was lost;³² of this he afterwards gave Mr. Catcott a copy as one of Rowley's compositions.³³

But this transmission of it to a distant friend was still a private communication. It was not till the

at an explanation of, and connected many of the words, still the sense was notoriously deficient. Phillips was to all appearance mortified at the disappointment, expressing his sorrow at his want of success, and repeatedly declaring his intention of resuming the attempt at a future period.' Thistlethwaite's account, 469, 470. This account is important, as verifying two facts; the reality of the old MSS. and the great difficulty of deciphering them. But writing from memory, in 1781, Mr. Thistlethwaite has mistated the time of the incident in 1764, instead of 1767 or 1768; as the mother and sister expressly state that Chatterton neither knew of, nor had any of the MSS. till some time after he had been articled in July 1767.

³² His letter is dated 6th March 1768, when he was only fifteen years three months and sixteen days old. It begins, 'Dear friend! I must now close my poetical labours, my master being returned from London.' He then adds a good deal of idle chit-chat about a Miss Rumsey; and thus concludes it: 'The poems, &c. on Miss Hoyland, I wish better, for her sake and yours. The *TOURNAMENT* I have only one canto of, which I send herewith. *The remainder is entirely lost.* I am, with the greatest regret, going to subscribe myself your faithful and constant friend till death do us part. Th. Ch.' 3. Chatt. Works, p. 415. There is an artlessness and absence of all pretence and purpose in this paragraph, which induces one to believe that he was then sending to his friend a genuine thing; especially as the distance of America took away all object of immediate interest; nor does he seem to have been seeking any. Vanity might have tempted him to have noticed it as his own, but he does not; but speaks of it as part of an ancient relic, of which the rest was lost. From his not saying more about it, or whose it was, it is rational to suppose that his friend had known of it before, and had been expecting to receive it. As this poem has, from these circumstances, the appearance of being the most genuine of all that he produced, the reader will find it inserted at the end of this chapter.

³³ Tyrrihit, Introd. p. 28. 'I cannot but think this poem superior to what Chatterton could, from his own resources, have fabricated at the age of fifteen years and a quarter.'

BOOK
VIII.HISTORY OF
ENGLISH
POETRY.

following October, that he made any public disclosure of any of his MSS. It was then about seven weeks before his sixteenth birth-day, that he left, at the office of a Bristol newspaper, a description, in prose, of "The Friars first passing over the Old Bridge."³⁴

The opening of a new bridge at Bristol was the cause of Chatterton taking this account of the commencement of the public use of the old one, to the printer for his insertion; who, being questioned as to his authority for it, discovered, after much inquiry, that it had been brought by this little-known lad. He "was at first very unwilling to discover from whence he had the original; but after many promises made to him, he was at length prevailed on to acknowledge that he had received this, together with many other MSS. from his father, who had found them in a large chest in an upper room over the chapel, on the north side of Redcliffe church."³⁵

This description of the opening the bridge was picturesque, but short; and contains nothing which is inconsistent with its subject and genuineness; and yet to this first of his public communications of his ancient documents, the fraudulent fabrication of an original was attached.³⁶ But whatever may have been

³⁴ It was on the 1st October 1768, that Chatterton began his public communication of what he possessed, by this note, to the printer of Farley's Bristol Journal. 'The following description, taken from an old MS. may not at this time be unacceptable to the generality of your readers. Your's, Dunelmus Bristolnensis.'

³⁵ Mr. Catcott's account in Tyrrhwit's Pref. p. vii.

³⁶ His friend Rudhall, who was apprentice to an apothecary at Bristol, and well acquainted with Chatterton while articled to Mr. Lambert, thus states this striking fact: 'During that time, Chatterton frequently called upon him at his master's house; and soon after he had printed the account of the bridge, told Mr. Rudhall that he was the author of it; but it occurring to him afterwards that he might be called upon to produce the original, he brought to him one day a piece of parchment, about the size

the projects that were then floating in Chatterton's mind, or whatever he might have been preparing in secret for his future operations, he made no further effort to protrude himself on the notice of others, nor attempted to derive any advantage from his real or supposititious store. What he was doing was executed in solitary privacy, unknown to any one; nor did he adduce what he was transcribing or inventing, until it was sought for from him. This was one of the greatest features of sincerity; and yet even this cannot be separated, at least in part, from deliberate imposture.

CHAP.
VII.
FORMS OF
CHATTER-
TON.

At the latter end of the same year 1768, after the publication of the bridge account, Mr. George Catcott, brother of the writer on the Deluge, walking with a friend in Redcliffe church, was informed by him of several ancient pieces of poetry being found there; and that many specimens were in the hands of a young lad with whom he was acquainted. Mr. Catcott desired to be introduced to their possessor, and in his subsequent interviews with Chatterton, readily obtained from him *The Bristowe Tragedy*, Rowley's epitaph upon Mr. Canynge's ancestor, with some other little pieces. In a few days, the youth brought some more, among which was the *Yellow Roll*,³⁷ and the *Song to Ælla*; ³⁸ part of these he gave as presents, without any reward; ³⁹ part were pur-

of a half-sheet of foolscap paper. Mr. Rudhall *does not think that any thing was written on it* when produced by Chatterton; but he saw him write several words, if not lines, in a character which Mr. R. did not understand. He cannot determine precisely how much Chatterton wrote in this manner; but the time C. spent in that visit, did not exceed three quarters of an hour. When Chatterton had written on the parchment, he held it over the candle, to give it the appearance of antiquity, which changed the colour of the ink, and made the parchment appear black, and a little contracted.' 3 *Chatt. Works*, p. 486, 7.

³⁷ Bryant, p. 516, 7.

³⁸ Matthias, 517.

³⁹ Bryant, 517.

BOOK
VIII.HISTORY OF
ENGLISH
POETRY.

chased of him.⁴⁰ In his conversations with Mr. Catcott, he mentioned the names of most of the poems that were afterwards printed, as being then in his possession.⁴¹ What he gave to Mr. Catcott were chiefly his own copies of the originals he talked of, who communicated them to Mr. Barrett, an eminent surgeon of Bristol, who was then compiling a History of that city. Mr. Barrett became acquainted with Chatterton, and obtained from him several transcripts and some fragments of MSS. on vellum : one of them containing the versified " Accounte of W. Canynge's Feast,"⁴² and " The Parliament of Sprytes."

Two very marking circumstances are connected with the poems which this ingenious lad gave to Mr. Catcott, but each was of a counteracting tendency as to their genuineness ; and they strongly imply the very mixed state of this disputed question, and that Chatterton's conduct was an heterogeneous combination of much truth and of much falsehood. The " Bristowe Tragedy," was the death of sir Charles Bawdin ;⁴³ and what he delivered to Mr. Catcott was his own copy of an alleged original. But of this very poem we have the information from the best authority, that he confessed it to his family to be his own composition, upon an original groundwork⁴⁴—an acknowledgement which reveals to us the real nature of the far largest portion of what he produced as the poetry of Rowley.

⁴⁰ Tyrrhwit, Pref. viii.

⁴¹ Bryant, 517. He told Mr. Catcott, that his father had a MS. of music composed by Rowley. This might have been the book out of which he was taught his letters by his mother. ib. 518.

⁴² Tyrrhw. ix-xi. Bryant, p. 517.

⁴³ Rowley's Poems, p 44.

⁴⁴ His sister, in her letter of 17th October 1802, declares, ' When he read the death of Sir Charles Bawdin to my mother, she admired it, and asked him if he made it. He replied, I FOUND THE ARGUMENT, and VERSIFIED IT.' Chatt. Works, v. 3. p. 524.

The other fact relates to the "Song to Ælla," a very easy composition;⁴⁵ it was the first specimen which Mr. Barrett obtained. A copy was given to him in Chatterton's hand-writing in the latter end of 1768; and upon inquiring concerning the original, the next morning; it appeared soiled and rumpled, the ink was faded and the letters faint.⁴⁶ But the circumstance

CHAP.
VII.

POEMS OF
CHATTER-
TON.

⁴⁵ 'The title in the vellum MS. was simply 'Songe toe Ælla,' with a full mark of reference to the following words below: 'Lorde of the stalle of Brystowe ynne daies of yore.' The whole song was there written like prose; without any breaks or divisions into verses. Tyrrel, *rod.* p. xvi, xvii.

⁴⁶ Bryant, p. 557. The following is a copy of it, as correctly printed:—

Oh thou! orr what remaynes of thee!
Ælla! the darlynge of futurity!
Lett thys mie songe, bolde as thie courage be,
As everlastynge to posteritye.

Whanne Dacya's sonnes, whose hayres of bloude-redde hue,
Lyche kynges cuppes brastyng wythe the morning due,
Arraung'd ynne dreare arraie
Upponne the lethale daie,
Spredde farre and wyde onne Watchets shore;
Than dyddst Thou furiose stande;
And bie thie valyante hande,
Beesprengedd all the mees wythe gore.

Drawne bie thyne anlace felle,
Downe to the depthe of helle
Thousandes of Dacyanns went;
Brystowannes menne of myghte
Ydar'd the bloudie fyghte
And actedd deeds full quent.

Oh thou! whereer (thie bones att reste)
Thye spryte to haunte delyghteth beste,
Whetherr upponne the bloude-embrewedd pleyne;
Orr whare thou kennst froum farre,
The dysmall crye of warre,
Orr seest somme mountayne made of corse of sleyned:

Orr seest the hatchedd stede,
Ypraunceynge o'er the mede,
And neighe to be amenged the poyntedd speeres:
Orr ynne blacke armoure staulk arounde,
Embattel'd Brystowe, once thie grounde,
And glowe ardurous onn the castle steeres:

BOOK
VIII.HISTORY OF
ENGLISH
POETRY.

which pleads in favor of its genuineness, and of Chatterton's honesty in this instance is, that in the copy he gave to Mr. Barrett, he had read and written one word as "*Ifrayninge*" in these lines—

Orr seest the hatchedd stede
Ifrayninge o'er the mede.

But when the original parchment, brought the next day, had been cleaned and examined more accurately, the true reading was found to be, not *ifrayninge*, but *yprauncynge*.⁴⁷ That he should have thus misread and miscopied the MS. is a strong indication of its genuineness, as such a mistake could not have occurred in a forgery of his own.

In the next year, 1769, when turned of sixteen, he gave Mr. Catcott his transcript of the longest and the most interesting of all that he produced as Rowley's writings, the tragical interlude of *Ælla*, with an epistle and letter from the author to Canynge, and an introduction—the latter in stanza verses.⁴⁸ In May of the same year he sent the eclogue of *Elinoure and Jug* to the Town and Country Magazine, as "written 300 years ago by T. Rowley, a secular priest."⁴⁹

If from these productions we turn to the account of

Orr fierye round the mynsterr glare;
Lette Bristowe styll be made thie care;
Garde ytt fromme foemenne and consumynge fyre;
Lyche Avones streame, ensyrke ytte rounde,
Ne lette a flame enharme the grounde,
Tylle ynn one flame all the whole worlde expyre.

Rowley's Poems, p. 23-5. ed 1772.

⁴⁷ Bryant, p. 565. Prefixed to it were some verses to Lydgate, and his answer.

⁴⁸ Tyrh. Introd. The MS. stated it to have been 'played before Mastre Canynge, at his house, nempte the rodde Lodge, by four persons, representing its four chief characters; *Ælla*, by Rowley, priest, the Author; *Celmonde*, by Johan Iscam, priest; *Hurra*, by Sir Thybbotte Gorges, knight; *Bertha*, by Mastre Edwarde Canynge.' Rowl: Poems, p. 66. It consists, as printed, of 1245 lines. The same folio MS. contained also 'Goddwyn, a Tragedie,' of 212 lines, in Chatterton's handwriting. Tyrh. p. xx.

⁴⁹ Tyrh. p. xvi.

his school-fellows and companions at this period, we find one asserting, that at divers visits made to him in 1768, he found him employed in copying Rowley from apparent originals; and consulting the glossary to Chaucer to enable himself to understand them.⁵⁰ Another remembered that he then frequently mentioned his having such writings, and had given part of them to Mr. Barrett and Mr. Catcott;⁵¹ and his intimate acquaintance, Smith, declares, that Chatterton read these poems to him as ancient pieces of writing which came from Redcliffe church; that these MSS. were upon vellum; that Smith had very often seen Chatterton transcribe them at his office, and read them to him when he had transcribed them.⁵²

But amid these circumstances of reality and authenticity, other manifest facts of forgery or insincerity intermingled themselves. He delivered the first part of the "Battle of Hastings" in stanzas containing 564 lines,⁵³ as Rowley's composition.⁵⁴ "Being afterwards

CHAP.
VII.

POEMS OF
CHATTER-
TON.

⁵⁰ Thistlethwaite's Letter, p. 472. Mr. Capel, who was apprentice in the same house in which was Chatterton's office, also stated to Mr. Bryant, that he often called in upon him when he was writing; and that he had at times seen him copying MSS. He remembered very well that they lay in heaps, and in great confusion, and seemed rumpled and stained: and near them were the papers upon which Chatterton was transcribing; that Chatterton spoke of the MSS. as ancient writings, and told him that he was then *studying to understand the old language* in which they were written." Bryant, p. 524.

⁵¹ Cary's Letter in 1776, to Mr. Catcott. Bryant, 526.

⁵² Smith's account to Dr. Glynn. Bryant, p. 527, 8. He added, 'that walking with him in Redcliffe meadows, Chatterton shewed him a parchment, and told him that the steeple of the church had been burnt down once by lightning.' *ib.* 530. One of these MS. mentioned this circumstance. It had not been noticed elsewhere; but eight years after the youth's death, Mr. Nasmith published the MS. work of W. Wyrcestre, and in that it was found mentioned, that the 'Turris de Radclyfe continet 300 pedes, de quibus 100 pedes sunt *per fulmen* dejecti.' p. 120. An extraordinary verification of Chatterton's fact, and of the Rowley MS. from which he had mentioned it.

⁵³ Rowley's Poems, p. 210-238.

⁵⁴ He gave it this title, 'Battle of Hastings, wrote by Turgot the Monk,
VOL. V. D D

BOOK
VIII.HISTORY OF
ENGLISH
POETRY.

preſt by Mr. Barrett to produce any part of this poem in the original hand-writing, he at laſt ſaid, that ~~he~~ *wrote this poem himſelf* for a friend; but that he had another on the ſame ſubject, the copy of an original by Rowley. Being then deſired to produce that other poem, he, after a conſiderable interval of time, brought to Mr. Barrett the poem marked N° 2, (the ſecond part) as far as verſe 530, with the following title: “ Battle of Haſtyngs by Turgotus, translated by Roulie, for W. Canynge, eſquire.”⁵⁵

Both of theſe ſo much reſemble each other in ſtyle, contents and merit, that we cannot willingly aſſign them to different authors; yet, after producing the firſt as Rowley’s, Chatterton acknowledged it to be his own.

They have each this mark of his manufacture, that they are leſs antiquated in their words, and more generally readable than any other of the poems, except that of Sir Charles Bawdin, which he had confeſſed to his mother to be his own fabrication. It is unneceſſary in this hiſtory to investigate theſe poems any further. The concluſion of my own mind, from all the facts that were brought forward, is, that Thomas Rowley was a real perſon,⁵⁶ and likewise his patron William Canyng, who, after being an affluent

a Saxon, in the *tenth* century, and translated by Thomas Rowlie, pariſh preſte of St. John’s, in the city of Briſtol, in the year 1465; adding, ‘*The remainder of the poem I have not been happy enough to meet with.*’ Tyrrhw. Introd. xxi.

⁵⁵ Tyrrhw. xxii. ‘The lines from verſe 531 were brought ſometime after, in conſequence of Mr. Barrett’s repeated ſolicitations for the concluſion of the poem.’ *ib.* This continuation contained 200 more lines and ends abruptly. p. 264–274.

⁵⁶ In the register of Wells, in the diocēſe of which Briſtol is include this entry exiſts: ‘Thomas Rowle was ordained acolyth, 31ſt May 1437. That the family of the Rowleys was then at Briſtol alſo, and conneſted with St. John’s church, appears by the inſcription, in its chancel, ‘Thomas Rowley, merchant, who died 1478.’ Bryant, p. 537. In 1710 W. Rowley alſo appears in the ledger book of St. Ewin’s church. *ib.*

CHAP.
VII.POEMS OF
CHATTER-
TON.

merchant, and five times mayor of Bristol,⁵⁷ entered into holy orders in his old age:⁵⁸ That Chatterton was possessed of authentic MSS. of Rowley's poetry, and of many MSS. concerning Canynge; that some of the transcripts, or MSS. which he produced contained circumstances which other documents verified;⁵⁹ that Sir Charles Bawdin and the Battle of Hastings, in both parts, were his own compositions, but probably on some ancient materials in his possession; that the Tragedy of Ælla has the appearance of being his own modernisation of Rowley's original, like Dryden and Pope's improvements of Chaucer's Tales; and that those which are most likely to be what Rowley actually left, or nearly so, are the little song to Ælla, and the Tournament; especially as this latter contains several words which Chatterton did not understand, and has incorrectly explained.⁶⁰

His application to Mr. Horace Walpole⁶¹—his

⁵⁷ W. Canyng is repeatedly mentioned by W. Wyrcestre, whose Itinerary was not published till after Chatterton's death. Wyrcestre calls Canynge 'ditissimus et sapientissimus mercator; Dean of Westbury; obiit 17 Nov. 1474. He adds, that he had been seven years a presbyter, and five times mayor. Itin. p. 83 and 261. In p. 99, he notices his ships, and many facts of him in other passages.

⁵⁸ By the register of Worcester, it appears that Mr. Canynge was ordained acolythe by bishop Carpenter, on 19 Sept. 1467, and priest in the following April. Tyrhwh. xxiv.

⁵⁹ Mr. Bryant has noticed several of these verifications, chiefly of his prose MSS.

⁶⁰ I have observed several of these, and I am also induced to think that in others, of which the meaning is not now translatable, Chatterton has misread and miscopied what, from the loss of the originals, cannot now be supplied. Mr. Bryant has made just remarks on several words which have excited his criticism, and decides in favor of the genuineness of the poems generally, on the ground that 'whoever brings a copy of a prior writing, and does not understand that writing, such a person cannot be the author of it.' p. 584. Mr. Bryant errs in vindicating the genuineness of *all* the poems as they stand; as Mr. Warton does, in considering the whole to be a forgery.

⁶¹ He began it by a letter to Walpole, from Bristol, dated 25 March 1769, inclosing a copy of Rowley's remarks on 'The rise of Painting in England,' and one of his smaller poems on Richard I.; and mentioning in the notes to it, that 'some of his pieces would do honor to Pope.' Chatt. Works, v. 3. p. 377-384.

BOOK
VIII.HISTORY OF
ENGLISH
POETRY.

haughty temper⁶²—his unfortunate irreligion⁶³—his hasty visit to London⁶⁴—his eager kindnesses to his family⁶⁵—his high hopes—his disappointment, distress, and melancholy self-destruction⁶⁶ there, in less than four months after his arrival in the metropolis, and before he had completed his eighteenth year, excite our most compassionating sympathy and deep regret, that so much genius should have deviated at all into the dereliction of its integrity; and that the absence of steady moral principles, and the adoption of deteriorating theories and hopeless scepticism, should have injured such a mind and curtailed the life of one so qualified to have done honor to his country and his kind.⁶⁷

⁶² His sister mentions, 'I saw with concern he was proud and exceedingly imperious.' *ib.* p. 464. In his own letter to Mr. Barrett, before he left Bristol, he thus mentions this infirmity. 'It is my pride; my damned native, unconquerable pride, that plunges me into distraction. You must know that 19-20ths of my composition is pride.' *Ib.* 418.

⁶³ To Mr. Catcott, in August 1770, a short time before he destroyed himself, he wrote: 'Heaven send you the comforts of christianity. I request them not, for I am no Christian. I intend going abroad as a surgeon.' *Chatt. Works*, v. 3. p. 407. What he called his will, when he was meditating suicide at Bristol, in the preceding April, breathes the same mistaken spirit. p. 455.

⁶⁴ He thus described his views in this journey to his friend Thistlethwaite: 'My first attempt shall be in the literary way. Should I find myself deceived, I will in that case turn methodist preacher. Credulity is as potent a deity as ever, and a new sect may easily be devised. But if that too shall fail, my last and final resource is a pistol.' p. 477.

⁶⁵ The little presents of fans and gowns purchased and sent to his mother and sister out of his first little gains, are delightful evidences of his family affections. p. 429. 434. 443, 4. 6. *O si sic omnia!*

⁶⁶ On 24 August 1770, he had not eaten any thing for two or three days, but would not accept of the invitation to dinner that was pressed upon him, and on that night was found, by the coroner's inquest, to have swallowed arsenic in water, of which he died the next day. *Dr. Gregory's Life*, v. 1. p. lxx.

⁶⁷ Gardner thus speaks of his personal appearance: 'I particularly recollect the philosophic gravity of Chatterton's countenance, and the keen lightning of his eye;' but adds this intimation of his impostures: 'Once I saw him rub a parchment with ochre, and afterwards rub it on the ground, saying, 'that was the way to antique it.' *Chatt. Works*, v. 3. p. 520. Mr. Capel mentioned, 'That there was generally a dreariness in his look, and a wildness, attended with a visible contempt for others. Upon his being any ways irritated; or otherwise greatly affected, there was

By his mistaken conduct, the ancient literature of our country has been deprived of some compositions which seem to have been more than usually valuable; but which, by his mixing them up with so much palpable fabrications, have been thereby rendered un-serviceable to the historian, and unsatisfactory and suspicious to every general reader.⁶⁸

CHAP.
VII.

POEMS OF
CHATTERTON.

a light in his eyes which seemed very remarkable.—This circumstance was mentioned by others who knew him. Bryant, p. 525.

⁶⁸ As the TOURNAMENT seems to have the strongest pretensions to be a genuine work of Rowley's, it is subjoined to this note, with Chatterton's glossary.

THE TOURNAMENT.

AN INTERLUDE.

Enter AN HERAWDE.

THE Tournament begynnes; the hammerrs sounde;
The coursers lysse¹ about the mensured² felde;
The shemrynge armoure throws the sheene arounde;
Quayntyssed³ fons⁴ depicte⁵ onn eche sheelde.
The feerie⁶ heaulmets, wythe the wreathes amielde,⁷
Supportes the rampynge lyoncell⁸ orr beare,
Wythe straunge depyctures,⁹ Nature maie nott yeelde,
Unseemelie to all orderr doe appere,
Yett yatte⁹ to menne, who thyncke and have a spryte,¹⁰
Makes knowne thatt the phantasies unrighte.
I, Sonne of Honnoure, spencer¹¹ of her joies,
Muste swythen¹² goe to yeve¹³ the speeres arounde,
Wythe advantayle¹⁴ & borne¹⁵ I meynte¹⁶ emploie,
Who withoute mee woulde fall untoe the grounde.
Soe the tall oake the ivie twysteth rounde;
Soe the neshe¹⁷ flower grees¹⁸ ynn the woodeland shade.
The worlde bie diffrance ys ynn orderr founde;
Wydhoute unlikenesse nothyng could bee made.
As ynn the bowke¹⁹ nete²⁰ alleyn²¹ cann bee donne,
Syke²² ynn the weal of kynde all thynges are partes of onne.

¹ sport, or play.

² fancys or devices.

⁶ ornamented, enameled

⁹ that.

¹² quickly.

¹⁵ burnish.

¹⁸ grows.

²¹ alone.

² bounded or measured.

⁴ painted, or displayed.

⁷ a young lion.

¹⁰ soul.

¹³ give.

¹⁶ many.

¹⁹ body.

²² so.

³ curiously devised.

⁵ fiery.

⁸ drawings, paintings.

¹¹ dispenser.

¹⁴ armor.

¹⁷ young, weak, tender.

²⁰ nothing.

BOOK
VIII.

HISTORY OF
ENGLISH
POETRY.

Enterr SYRR SYMONNE DE BOURTONNE.

Herauwe,²³ bie heavenne these tyltters staie too long.
Mie phantasie ys dyinge forr the fyghte.
The mynstrelles have begonне the thyrd warr songe,
Yett notte a speere of hemm²⁴ hath grete mie syghte.
I feere there be ne manne wordhie mie myghte.
I lacke a Guid,²⁵ a Wyllyamm²⁶ to entylte.
To reine²⁷ anente²⁸ a fele²⁹ embodiedd knyghte,
Ytt gettes ne rennoime³⁰ gyff hys blodde bee spylte.
Bie heavenne & Marie ytt ys tyme they're here ;
I lyche nott unthylle³¹ thus to wielde the speare.

HERAUWDE.

Methynckes I heare yer slugghornes³² dynn³³ fromm farre.

BOURTONNE.

Ah ! swythenn³⁴ mie shielde & tyltynge launce be bounde.
Eftsoones³⁵ behest³⁷ mie Squyerr to the warre.
I flie before to clayme a challenge grownde. [*Goth out*]

HERAUWDE.

This valourous actes woulde meinte³⁸ of menne astounde ;
Harde bee yer shappe³⁹ encontrynge thee ynn fyglite ;
Anenst⁴⁰ all menne thou berest to the grounde,
Lyche the hard hayle dothe the tall roshes pyghte.⁴¹
As whanne the mornynge sonne ydrouks the dew,
Syche dothe thie valourous actes drocke⁴² eche knyghte's hue

The LYSTES. The Kyng. Syrr Symonne de Bourtonne. Syr
Hugo Ferraris, Syrr Ranulph Neville, Syrr Lodovick de
Clynton, Syrr Johan de Berghamme, and odherr Knyghtes,
*Herauwdes, Mynstrelles, and Servytours.*⁴³

KYNGE.

The barganette;⁴⁴ yee mynstrelles tune the strynge,
Somme actyonn dyre of auntyante kynges now synge.

MYNSTRELLES.

Wyllyamm, the Normannes floure botte Englonde's thorne,
The manne whose myghte delievretie⁴⁵ hadd knite,

²³ herald.

²⁴ a contraction of *them*.

²⁵ *Gue de Sancto Egidio*, the most famous tilter of his age.

²⁶ William Rufus.

²⁷ run.

²⁸ against.

²⁹ feeble.

³⁰ honor, glory.

³¹ useless.

³² a kind of claryon.

³³ sound.

³⁴ quickly.

³⁵ ready.

³⁶ soon.

³⁷ command.

³⁸ most.

³⁹ fate, or doom.

⁴⁰ against.

⁴¹ pitched or bent down.

⁴² drink.

⁴³ servants, attendants.

⁴⁴ song, or ballad.

⁴⁵ activity.

Snett⁴⁶ oppe hys long strunge bowe and sheelde aborne,⁴⁷
 Behesteynge⁴⁸ all hys hommageres⁴⁹ to fyghte.
 Goe, rouze the lyonn fromm hys hylted⁵⁰ denne,
 Lett thie fies⁵¹ drenche the blodde of anie thyng bote menne.

Ynn the treed forreste doe the knyghtes appere;
 Wylyamm wythe myghte hys bowe enyroan'd⁵² plies;⁵³
 Loude dynns⁵⁴ the arrowe ynn the wolfynn's eare;
 Hee ryæth battent,⁵⁵ roares, he panctes, hee dyes.
 Forslaggen att thie feete lett wolvyngs bee,
 Lett thie fies drenche theyre blodde, bote do ne bredrenn slea.

Throwe the merke⁵⁶ shade of twistynde trees hee rydes;
 The flemed⁵⁷ owlett⁵⁸ flapps herr eve-speckte⁵⁹ wynges;
 The lcrdyng⁶⁰ toade ynn all hys passes bides;
 The berten⁶¹ neders⁶² at hymm darte the stynges;
 Styll, styll, hee passes onn, hys stede astrodde,
 Nee hedes the daungerous waie gyff leadyng toot bloodde.

The lyoncel, fromme sweltrie⁶³ countries braughte,
 Coucheynge binethe the sheltre of the brierr.
 Att commyng dynn⁶⁴ doth rayse hymselfe distraughte,⁶⁵
 Hee loketh wythe an eie of flames of fyre.
 Goe, sticke the lyonn to hys hyltren denne,
 Lette thie fies⁶⁶ drenche the blood of anie thyng bote menne.

Wythe passent⁶⁷ steppe the lyonn mov'th alonge;
 Wylyamm hys ironne-woven bowe hee bendes,
 Wythe myghte alyche the roghlyng⁶⁸ thonderr stronge;
 The lyonn ynn a roar hys spryte foorth sendes.
 Goe, slea the lyonn hys blodde-steyn'd denne,
 Botte bee thie takelle⁶⁹ drie fromm blodde of odherr menne.

Swefte fromm the thyckett starks the stagge awaie;
 The couraciers⁷⁰ as swefte doe afterr flie.
 Hee lepethe hie, hee stondes, hee kepes att baie,
 Botte metes the arrowe, and eftsoones⁷¹ doth die,

⁴⁶ bent.⁴⁹ servants.⁵² worked with iron.⁵³ loudly.⁶⁰ marked with evening dew.⁶¹ venomous.⁶⁴ sound, noise.⁶⁷ walking leisurely.⁷⁰ horse coursers.⁴⁷ burnished.⁵⁰ hidden.⁵³ bends.⁵⁶ dark, or gloome.⁶² adders.⁶⁶ distracted.⁶⁸ rolling.⁷¹ full soon.⁴⁸ commanding.⁵¹ arrows.⁵⁴ sounds.⁵⁷ & ⁵⁸ frightened owl.⁶⁰ standing on their hind legs.⁶³ hot, sultry.⁶⁶ arrows.⁶⁹ arrow.

BOOK
VIII.HISTORY OF
ENGLISH
POETRY.

Forslagenn atte thie fote lette wylde beastes bee,
Lett thie flocs drenche yer blödde, yett do ne bredrenn slee.
Wythe murtherr tyredd, he sleynge hys bowe alyne.⁷²
The stagge ys ouch'd⁷³ wythe crownes of lillie flowerres.
Arounde theire heaulmes theie greene verte doe entwyne;
Joying and rev'lous ynn the grene wode bowerris.
Forslagenn wyth thie floe lette wylde beastes bee,
Feeste thee upponne theire fleshe, doe ne thie bredrenn slee.

KYNGE.

Now to the Tourneie;⁷⁴ who wylle fyrst affraie?⁷⁵

HERAULDE.

Neville, a baronne, bee yatte⁷⁶ honnoure thyne.

BOURTONNE.

I clayme the passage.

NEVILLE.

I contak⁷⁷ thie waie.

BOURTONNE.

Thenn there's mie gauntlette⁷⁸ onn mie gaberdyne.⁷⁹

HEREHAULDE.

A leegefull⁸⁰ challenge, knyghtes & championns dygne,⁸¹

A leegefull challenge, lette the slugghorne sounde.

[Syrr Symonne and Neville tylle —

Neville ys goeynge, manne and horse, toe grounde.

[Neville falls —

Loverdes, how doughtilie⁸² the tyltters joyne!

Yee championnes, heere Symonne de Bourtonne fyghtes,
Onne hee hathe quacedd,⁸³ assayle⁸⁴ hymm, yee knyghtes.

FERRARIS.

I wylle anente⁸⁵ hymm goe; mie squierr, mie shielde;Orr onne orr odherr wyll doe myckle⁸⁶ scethe⁸⁷Before I doe departe the lissed⁸⁸ fieldes,Mieselfe orr Bourtonne hereupponn wyll blethe.⁸⁹

My shielde.

⁷² across his shoulders.⁷³ garlands of flowers being put round the neck of the game, it was said to be ouch'd, from ouch, a chain, worn by earls round their necks.⁷⁴ Tournament.⁷⁵ fight, or encounter.⁷⁶ that.⁷⁷ dispute.⁷⁸ glove.⁷⁹ a piece of armour.⁸⁰ lawful.⁸¹ worthy.⁸² furiously.⁸³ vanquished.⁸⁴ oppose.⁸⁵ against.⁸⁶ much.⁸⁷ damage, mischief.⁸⁸ bounded;⁸⁹ bleed.

BOURTONNE.

Comme onne, & fitte thie tylte-launce ethe.⁹⁰
Whanne Bourtonne fyghtes, hee metes a doughtie foe.

[*Theie tylte.* Ferraris falleth.
Hee falleth; nowe bie heavenne thie woundes doe smethe;⁹¹
I feere mee, I have wroughte thee myckle woe.⁹²

CHAP.
VII.POEMS OF
CHATTER-
TON.

HERAWDE.

Bourtonne hys seconde beereth to the feelde.
Comme onn, ye knyghtes, and wynn the honnour'd sheeld.

BERGHAMME.

I take the challenge; squyre, mie launce and stede.
I, Bourtonne, take the gauntlette; forr mee staie.
Botte, gyff thou fyghteste mee, thou shalt have mede;⁹³
Somme odherr I wylle champyonn toe affraie;⁹⁴
Perchaunce fromme hemm I maie possess the daie,
Thenn I schalle bee a foemanne forr thie spere.
Herehawde, toe the bankes of Knyghtys saie,
De Berghamme wayteth forr a foemann heere.

CLINTON.

Botte longe thou schalte ne tende;⁹⁵ I doe thee fie.⁹⁶
Lyche forreyng⁹⁷ levynn,⁹⁸ schalle mie tylte-launce fie.
[Berghamme and Clinton *tylte.* Clinton *fallethe.*

BERGHAMME.

Nowe, nowe Syrr Knyghte, attour⁹⁹ thie beeveredd¹⁰⁰ eyne,
I have borne downe, and este¹⁰¹ doe gauntlette thee.
Swythenne¹⁰² begynne, and wrynn¹⁰³ thie shappe¹⁰⁴ or myne;
Gyff thou dyscomfytte, ytt wylle dobblie bee.
[Bourtonne & Burghamm *tylteth.* Berghamme *falls.*

HERAWDE.

Symonne de Bourtonne haveth borne downe three,
And bie the thyrd hathe honnoure of a fourthe.
Lett hymm bee sett asyde, tylle hee doth see
A tyltynge forr a knyghte of gentle wourthe.

⁹⁰ easy.
⁹³ reward.
⁹⁶ defy.
⁹⁹ turn.
¹⁰² quickly.

⁹¹ smoke.
⁹⁴ fight or engage.
⁹⁷ & ⁹⁸ destroying lightening.
¹⁰⁰ beaver'd.
¹⁰³ declare.

⁹² hurt, or damage.
⁹⁵ attend or wait.
¹⁰¹ again.
¹⁰⁴ fate.

BOOK
VIII.HISTORY OF
ENGLISH
POETRY.

Heere commethe straunge knyghtes; gyff corteous¹⁰⁵ heie,¹⁰⁶
Ytt welle beseis¹⁰⁷ to yeve¹⁰⁸ hemm ryghte of fraie.¹⁰⁹

FIRST KNYGHT.

Straungerrs wee bee, and homblie doe wee clayme
The rennome¹¹⁰ ynn thys Tourneia¹¹¹ forr to tylte;
Dherbie to proove fromm cravents¹¹² owre goode name,
Bewrynnynge¹¹³ thatt wee gentile blodde have spylte.

HEREHAWDE.

Yee knyghtes of cortesie, these straungerrs, saie,
Bee you fulle wyllynge forr to yeve hemm fraie?

[Five Knyghtes tyketh wythe the straunge Knyghte
and bee everichone¹¹⁴ overthrowne.]

BOURTONNE.

Nowe bie Seyncte Marie, gyff onn all the fialde
Ycrasedd¹¹⁵ speres and helmets bee besprente,¹¹⁶
Gyff everyche knyghte dydd houlde a piercedd¹¹⁷ sheeld,
Gyff all the feelde wythe championne blodde bee stente,¹¹⁸
Yett toe encounter hymm I bee contente.
Annoddherr launce, Marshalle, anodherr launce.
Albeytte hee wythe lowes¹¹⁹ of fyre ybrente,¹²⁰
Yett Bourtonne woulde agenste hys val¹²¹ advance.
Fyve haveth fallenn downe anethe¹²² hys speere,
Botte hee schalle be the next thatt falleth heere.
Bie thee, Seyncte Marie, and thy Sonne I sweare,
Thatt ynn whatte place yonn doughtie knyghte shall fall
Anethe¹²³ the stronge push of mie straught¹²⁴ out speere;
There schalle aryse a hallie¹²⁵ chyrches walle,
The whyche, ynn honnoure, I wyllie Marye calle,
Wythe pillars large, and spyre full hyghe and rounde.
And thys I faifullie¹²⁶ wyllie stonde to all,
Gyff yonderr straungerr falleth to the grounde.
Straungerr, bee boune;¹²⁷ I championn¹²⁸ you to warre.
Sounde, sounde the slughornes, to bee hearde fromm farre.

[Bourtonne & the Straungerr tylt. Straungerr fallet h.]

¹⁰⁵ worthy.¹⁰⁶ give¹¹¹ Tournament.¹¹⁴ every one.¹¹⁷ broken, or pierced thro with darts.¹¹⁹ flames.¹²² beneath.¹²³ holy.¹²⁶ challenge.¹⁰⁶ they.¹⁰⁹ fyght.¹¹² cowards.¹¹⁵ broken, split.¹²⁰ burnt.¹²³ against.¹²⁶ faithfully.¹⁰⁷ becomes.¹¹⁰ honour.¹¹³ declaring.¹¹⁶ scatter'd.¹¹⁸ stained.¹²¹ healm.¹²⁴ stretched out.¹²⁷ ready.

KYNGE.

The Mornynge Tyltes now cease.

HERAWDE.

Bourtonne ys kynge.

Dysplaie the Englyshe bannorre onn the tente;
 Rounde hymm, yee mynstrelles, songs of achments¹²⁹ synge;
 Yee Herawdes, getherr upp the speeres besprente;¹³⁰
 To Kynge of Tourney-tylte bee all knees bente.
 Dames, faire and gentle, forr youre loves hee foughte;
 Forr you the longe tylte-launce, the swerde hee shente;¹³¹
 Hee joustedd, allein¹³² havynge you ynn thoughte.
 Comme, mynstrelles, sound the strynge, goe onn eche syde,
 Whylest hee untœ the Kynge ynn state doe ryde.

MYNSTRELLES.

Whann Battayle, smethynge¹³³ wythe new quickenn'd gore,
 Bendynge wythe spoiles, and bloddie droppynge hedde,
 Dydd the merke¹³⁴ woode of ethe¹³⁵ and rest explore,
 Seckeynge to lie onn Pleasures downie bedde,
 Pleasure, dauncyng fromm her wode,
 Wreathedd wythe floures of aiglintine,
 Fromm hys vysage washedd the bloude,
 Hylte¹³⁶ hys swerde and gaberdyne.
 Wythe syke an eyne shee swotelie¹³⁷ hymm dydd view,
 Dydd soe ycorvenn¹³⁸ everrie shape to joie,
 Hys spryte dydd chaunge untœ anodherr hue,
 Hys armes, ne spoyles, mote anie thoughts emploie.
 All delyghtsomme and contente,
 Fyre enshotynge¹³⁹ fromm hys eyne,
 Ynn hys arms hee dydd herr hente,¹⁴⁰
 Lyche the merk¹⁴¹-plante doe entwyne.
 Soe, gyff thou lovest Pleasure and herr trayne,
 Onknowlachynge¹⁴² ynn whatt place herr to fynde,
 Thys rule yspende,¹⁴³ and ynn thie mynde retayne;
 Seeke Honnoure fyrste, and Pleasaunce lies behynde.

CHAP.
VII.

POEMS OF
CHATTER-
TON.

¹²⁹ achievements, glorious actions.

¹³¹ broke, destroyed. ¹³² only, alone.

¹³⁴ dark, gloomy. ¹³⁵ ense.

¹³⁷ sweetly. ¹³⁸ moulded.

¹⁴⁰ grasp, hold. ¹⁴¹ night-shade.

¹⁴³ consider.

¹³⁰ broken spears.

¹³³ smoking, steaming.

¹³⁶ hid, secreted.

¹³⁹ shooting, darting.

¹⁴² ignorant, unknowing.

CHAP. VIII.

*On the DRAMATIC representations of the Middle Ages.*BOOK
VIII.
—

THE popular effect of the acted drama ; and the rich beauties, the intellectual personifications, the appeal to our best sympathies, and the moral admonitions, which its printed compositions often present to every reader for his private contemplation, make the rise and progress of this class of our native poetry highly interesting both to our curiosity and to our reason.

But such obscurity attend its vernacular birth and infancy among us, that we cannot now delineate what time has either concealed in documents, which have not yet come to light, or has suffered to perish among those which his consuming accidents have destroyed.

The Roman Theatre fell into neglect and ruin, from its uncorrected and incurable depravities. This brand had occasioned the highly cultivated city of Marseilles to exclude it during the reign of the first Roman emperors, because it was felt to be incompatible with public morals.¹ To amuse the people, the Gothic kings permitted it to continue at Rome, tho with a feeling of its questionable utility.² The character and lives of the actors were however marked

¹ So Valerius Maximus inform us, that from its strict guardianship over the manners of its citizens, this city 'gives no entrance to the establishment of the theatre among them whose chief subjects are the actus stuprorum.' l. 2.

² We see this in the language of Athalaric, in his letter to the Roman senate. 'If we bestow our bounty on the scenical things, and attend carefully to those which are not deemed necessary, how much more ought it to be applied to those matters by which the becoming manners and habits are benefited, and fruitful talents are nourished in our palaces.' Cassiod. v. 1. p. 253. This minister mentions the pantomime several times : at p. 19. p. 26. p. 122.

at that time as discreditable, and as requiring from the government a superintending restraint.² These diversions had so declined in reputation, from their immorality, that correction only could sustain them in any continued favor.⁴

The moral taste of the barbaric conquerors of the Roman empire, who were peculiarly strict in their exaction of female virtue, gradually extinguished the corrupted drama of the classical nations,⁵ as their victorious hosts established themselves in the provinces they subdued:⁶ and hence this interesting effusion of human talent disappeared in France, Spain, Africa, and Britain.⁷

But altho public representations of the drama ceased, yet the taste for composing and reading its

CHAP.
VIII.

DRAMATIC
REPRESENTATIONS OF
THE MIDDLE AGES.

² Cassiodorus wrote—'Altho the artes lubricæ are remote from becoming morals, and the wandering life of stage-players may seem to be carried away in licentiousness, yet regulating antiquity has provided that they should not be wholly left at liberty, as they have a judicial inspection. These pleasurable exhibitions are to be administered under some discipline. Therefore if there be not a true, yet let an umbratilis ordo of judgment restrain the scenic actors.' vol. 1. p. 185.

⁴ 'Let then the spectacula be regulated by their suitable customs, because they cannot obtain favor unless they shall adopt some discipline.' He speaks of them as 'fama diminutis:' and adds, 'Love chastity, that it may be said that he who mixes with pleasures studies also the virtues.' Ib.

⁵ Plutarch, in his moral treatises, complains of the pravity of the comedies, even of the celebrated Menander, which are now utterly lost, except as to a few fragments which others have preserved.—These happen to be remarkably ethical, which was the cause of their being quoted and surviving; but Plutarch's censure shews us why so admired an author's works have perished, and with what good sense our Gothic ancestors acted, in not allowing even wit and elegance to preserve profligacy from oblivion. Genius destroys its own immortality whenever it becomes pernicious to society.

⁶ It is Salvian who remarks, that 'From the time the imperial districts began to fall under the power of the barbarians, these evils, the spectacula, no longer existed in the Roman cities.' De Gub. l. 6.

⁷ Du Clos mentions, that the theatres ceased in France when the western empire fell: in Spain, from the year 410: and in Africa, from 439, upon the fall of Carthage. Mem. Acad. Inscript. v. 26. p. 355.—The games of the Circus, which were not dramatic representations, were favored and continued by some of the Frankish kings.

BOOK
VIII.
HISTORY OF
ENGLISH
POETRY.

attractive works, slowly arose as ancient literature became studied, and its gratifying dramatists were read. Their effects we see, even in a German nunnery, in Hroswitha, the recluse poetess, who panegyrised Otho the Great with her copious Leonine Hexameters. She wrote also six religious comedies in prose, in imitation of those of Terence, and apparently to lessen his attraction to others, at the close of the tenth century.⁸ The same taste arose in others; a Latin Mystery on the Magi adoring the new-born Messiah, was represented in France, in the middle of the next age;⁹ and in the following one, another on anti-Christ, in Germany, in which, as probably in most at first, the story was told more by gesture and pantomime, than by speeches or narrative.¹⁰ At the same period, the Trobadour Anselm Faydet, the friend of our Richard I. composed both comedies and tragedies, for which he obtained an ample remuneration from his Provençal patrons.¹¹

The dramatic taste arose among the Anglo-Normans as soon they became acquainted with the classical literature. But the same reasons of the im-

⁸ They were chiefly on the conversion and passion of some ancient martyrs, both male and female. Fab. Bib. Med. l. 8. p. 830. They were printed in 1501, and again in 1707. Mr. Weber remarks, that the most ancient appearance of a drama, if it can be called so, in the German language, is 'The War at Wartlung,' a kind of poetical warfare, by eight ancient poets in 1207. Weber, Illust. North. Ant. p. 18.

⁹ Le Bœuf mentions this in the reign of the French Henry I. between 1031 and 1061. Virgil was here associated with the Magi, and joined them in singing a long Benedicamus.

¹⁰ Pez has printed this Latin mystery 'de adventu et interitu Ant. Christi,' from a MS. of the 12th century. Thes. vol. 2. p. 3. Mr. Price, in his note to Warton, thus mentions it: 'It approaches nearer to the character of a pageant, than to the dramatic cast of the later mysteries. The dumb show appears to have been considerable; the dialogue but occasional; and ample scope is given for the introduction of pomp and decoration. The passages to be declaimed are written in Latin rime.' Warton, Hist. Poet, v. 2. p. 68.

¹¹ Nostradamus, p. 62.

morality and paganism of its theatrical compositions which had occasioned Latin comedy to be disliked and disused, prevented it from being revived by translations or imitations. The jests or acted buffoonery of the minstrel and jongleur, were indecent enough to disgust all better taste; and they who felt a wish for something superior, or who thought, like Hroswitha, that they could compose such, directed their ingenuity to dramatise religious subjects, that they might indulge their desire for such representations without repentance or disgrace. This was not the wisest form of a moral and useful drama, but it was the only one which the clerical men of letters were either competent or desirous to attempt. In this shape they found that theatrical representations were neither discreditable, nor unpopular: and they cultivated such diversions in their monasteries with increasing assiduity. We read so early as 1110, of the play of St. Catherine, acted at Dunstable,¹² and the biographer of Thomas à Becket, at the end of the same century, mentions the holy plays and the representations of miracles, and the passions of the martyrs, which were then exhibited in London as its theatrical entertainments.¹³

In the thirteenth century, William de Wadington attacks the clergy for this practice, and speaks of them as having the popular denomination of MIRACLES.¹⁴

¹² Warton, Hist. Poet. v. 2. p. 68. and Dissert. 2.

¹³ 'Lundonia pro spectaculis theatralibus, pro ludis scenicis, *ludos habet sanctiores, representationes miraculorum*, quæ sancti confessores operati sunt, seu representationes passionum quibus claruit constantia martyrum,' Stephan. Desc. Lond.

¹⁴ 'Un autre folie assert,
Unt les fols clers cuntrové,
Qe *miracles* sunt apelé.

Manuel des Peches, Harl. MS. N° 273.

BOOK
VIII.HISTORY OF
ENGLISH
POETRY.

He describes them as acted in masks,¹⁵ and as representing the crucifixion and resurrection, to excite devotion;¹⁶ and as performed in the streets of cities, or in church-yards after meals; and to have been much frequented.¹⁷ Matthew Paris, in 1240, also speaks of them under the same title.¹⁸

Under Edward II. the versifier Baston is mentioned, as having composed "Vulgar Comedie and Tragedie,"¹⁹ and the earliest English *Miracle Play* now extant, on our Saviour's descent into hell, is in a MS. of the same reign.²⁰ Both Piers Plouhman²¹ and Chaucer mention these compositions.²²

In the next reign, of Edward III., plays before the king at Guildford are mentioned, with the dresses and masks of the performers.²³

¹⁵ Luz faces unt la deguise,
Par visers li forsene.—ib.

Manuel des Peches, Harl. MSS. N° 273 —

¹⁶ Cum Jhu Christ le fiz Dee,
En sepulchre esteit posé
Et la resurrection,
Par aver plus devociun.—ib.

¹⁷ Mes fere foles assemblez,
En les rues des citez,
Ou en cymiters apres mangiers,
Quant venent les fols volonters.—ib.

Mr. Price has added this passage to his Warton, v. 2. p. 69.

¹⁸ 'Miracula vulgariter Appellamus.' Vit. Abb. p. 56. Warton v. 2. p. 69.

¹⁹ Tanner, Bib. p. 79. Mr. Warton justly remarks, that satires and tales, which were not meant to be dramatic, were sometimes called comedies and tragedies in the middle ages. Chaucer and Lydgate used these words. Hist. v. 2. p. 67. Dante's definitions of them in the dedication of his Paradiso, correspond with this idea. See them quoted in Mr. Price's note to Warton, p. 67.

²⁰ Mr. Strutt noticed this in the second volume of his 'Manners and Customs of the People of England;' and Mr. Price remarks in 1824, that it had been then recently transcribed for publication. p. 70.

²¹ 'At markets and miracles we medely us never.'

²² In his prologue to the Wife of Bath's Tale.

Therefore made I my visitations
To PLAYS of MIRACLES and Marriages.

Warton, v. 2. p. 70.

²³ Mr. Warton has quoted the account from the Wardrobe rolls of

CHAP.
VIII.DRAMATIC
REPRESENTATIONS OF
THE MIDDLE AGES.

But that others besides the clergy were attempting some species of dramatic representations in England in the thirteenth century, we may infer from the ordinance in 1258, that the plays (*ludi*) of the *Histriones* should not be seen, nor heard, nor permitted to be done before monks.²⁴ The mandate of the Archbishop of Canterbury in 1287, explicitly points to dramatic exhibitions; it directs the parish priests to forbid the "theatrical plays and ludicrous spectacles, by which the decency of²⁵ their churches was polluted."

A few years after this we find dramatic exhibitions expressly mentioned both in France and Germany. By this time the clergy had taken them into their own hands, used their churches for theatres, and wrote plays on religious subjects, both for their own amusement and to interest the people. This is noticed about 1300, by a priest of Burgundy,²⁶ and something similar in 1322, was performed at Eisenach in Germany.²⁷

1348, v. 2. p. 71-2. These state, that in these *Ludi* were expended 80 tunics of buckram of various colours; 14 vizors of female faces; 14 of men with beards; and 14 of heads of angels made with silver; 28 crests; 14 mantles, embroidered with heads of dragons; 14 white tunics, wrought with heads and wings of peacocks; 14 heads of swans with wings; 14 tunics painted with peacocks' eyes; 14 tunics of painted English linen, and others embroidered with stars of gold and silver. Warton, v. 2. p. 7.

²⁴ 1 Gale's Script. Angl. p. 437. John of Salisbury, a century before, stated, that '*Histriones* and *mimi* could not receive the Holy Communion.' Policrat. l. 1. c. 8. In the Pipe Rolls, about 1200, The '*Mimici regis*', The king's mimics, are mentioned. Warton, p. 71. Both these passages imply acting.

²⁵ '*Ludos theatrales et ludibriorum spectacula.*' 1 Wilk. Conc. p. 140. He also enjoins the clergy not to frequent *Histrionibus et jocularibus*,—nor to presume to go '*ad spectacula publica, spectandi gratia.*' ib. 142.

²⁶ Honorius, in his *Gemma animæ*, says, 'As they who recited tragedies in the theatres, represented by acting or gestures (*gestibus*) to the people, the deeds of warriors, so our *Tragicus* inculcates by his actings the conflict of Christ to Christian people, in *Theatro Ecclesiæ.*' Max. Bib. Pat. v. 20. p. 1057. The authorities mentioned by Warton, p. 78, 9, imply profane dramas also in France at this period.

²⁷ The tragedy of the Ten Virgins was then performed before Frederic; the landgrave of Thuringia, on whom it had a very serious effect. Weber Illust. p. 18.

BOOK
VIII.HISTORY OF
ENGLISH
POETRY.

William of Wykeham forbid such things near his cathedral;²⁸ and in the reign of Richard II. the English ecclesiastics endeavored to confine the histrionic art and its benefits to their own order: for the clergy and scholars of St. Paul petitioned this king to prohibit a company of inexpert people from representing the history of the Old Testament, to their prejudice, as they had been at great charge and expence, in order to represent it publicly at Christmas.²⁹ The taste and practice of religious dramas became common in Europe during the fourteenth century; Italy decidedly possessed them. In 1243, the passion of our Saviour was represented at Padua;³⁰ and in 1298, his passion, resurrection and judgment, were performed by the clergy of Civita Vecchia, who in 1304, also represented the creation and annunciation.³¹ And in 1336, we have an account of a splendid representation of the Magi visiting the infant Messiah, which was performed in Italy.³² And Charles VI. in France so much liked and patronized these gratifying efforts of the awakening Muse, as to allow a detached company and even laymen to exhibit them.³³

²⁸ 'Canere cantilenas ludibriorum spectacula facere, saltationes et alios ludos inhonestos frequentare.' Wart. p. 73.

²⁹ I have omitted to add the reference of my authority for this fact to my note of it.

³⁰ Muratori Sc. Ital. v. 8, p. 365. So in 1264, at Rome. Tirab. v. 4, p. 343.

³¹ Warton, p. 84.

³² See Ferussac's Bull. Univ. for Oct. 1827, p. 338.

³³ In 1398, this king granted permission to some citizens to make a theatre at St. Maur, and to represent the passion of Our Saviour by their acting; and, in 1402, he suffered them to transport their theatre to Paris, and to play there exclusively, under the title of '*Les Confreres de la Passion*.' This roused the emulation of the *Jongleurs* and *Clowns* of Paris; and as what the *Confreres* performed were called *MYSTERES*, which became soon extended to St. Catherine and to Hercules, the others invented *MORALITIES*, where moral and abstract beings were personified, and which were often made satirical. Duclos, p. 365, 6.

At the council of Constance in 1417, the English bishops who were there, caused to be represented before the magistrates of the city, and afterwards before the Emperor Sigismund on his arrival, the Birth of our Saviour, the arrival of the Magi, and the Massacre of the Innocents;³⁴ and spectacles and compositions of the same sort were afterwards seriously cultivated by the Germans.³⁵ About this period may be placed those rude effusions of the religious drama which were played at Coventry, and of which such a curious specimen still remains for the amusement of our curiosity.³⁶

CHAP.
VIII.

DRAMATIC
REPRESENTATIONS
OF
THE MIDDLE
AGES.

These remarks will be sufficient to shew the nature of our dramatic representations during the middle ages, after which the regular drama emerged into existence under the Tudors, and acquired soon afterwards from the genius of Shakspeare a peculiar and transcendent excellence, which none of his poetical successors have surpassed, and which as yet, with all their imperfections, have in no other country been fully equalled.

³⁴ The latter performance was on Sunday, 31 Jan. 1417. *L'Enfant Hist. Conc. Constance*, v. 2. p. 440.

³⁵ About 1450, Hans Rosenblut wrote six short pieces for twelfth night; but the most curious relic of the Teutonic drama was produced in 1480 by T. Schernbek, a priest, entitled, *The Apotheosis of John VIII.* in German rime. See it described by Weber in his *North. Illustrations*, p. 19.

³⁶ They are in the Cotton parchment MS. of the fifteenth century, in the British Museum, *Vespas. D. 8.* Their subjects were taken from the New Testament, and their style reads as old as that of Lydgate. Sir W. Dugdale mentions this MS. as containing the dramas which were performed at Coventry during the feast of Corpus Christi. *Warw.* p. 116. The Cotton catalogue notices them as 'probably some of the mysteries acted by the mendicant friars.' On the Chester plays stated to have been exhibited in that city in 1327, see Warton's note and his late editor's remarks, p. 76, 77.

HISTORY OF ENGLAND.

BOOK. IX.

HISTORY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND PROSE COMPOSITION.

CHAP. I.

Progress of the Transition from the Anglo-Saxon to the English Language.

BOOK IX.

THE Roman conquest of Britain did not extirpate its ancient tongue; some Latin words became incorporated with the body of the language; but the people still spoke their ancient British.¹ The wars between them and the Romans were fierce, but short; the mass of the population suffered little in the con-

¹ In the poems of Taliesin many Latin words are actually interwoven; as in his *Kanu y Medd*—‘*Lleaws Creadur a fag terra.*’ Welsh Archaiol. p. 22. In the *Llath Moessen*, ‘*a Duw Reen rex meneifon.*’ p. 42. In the *Kerdd an Vab Lleir*, ‘*Gwyddyl a Brythan a Rhomane.*’ p. 67. In the *Yrymes Dyddbrawd*, ‘*Deus Duw delwad.*’ p. 83. In the *Yr Awdyl vraith*, we have *femina*, *homicida*, p. 93; *miserecordia*, *federa*, *Sabrina*, p. 94; and *ultima*, p. 95. So in the *Divregwawd Taliesin*, and elsewhere, there are added to his Welsh many Latin words. Many Latin words with British terminations may be traced in the present Cambrian language; which, as the Welsh were never a very learned people, may be referred more probably to the Roman residence in Britain, than to the studies of its inhabitants.

test; and the Britons submitted before any consumption of their numbers had occurred, that was sufficient to destroy their vernacular speech.²

CHA
I.

TRANSLATION OF
THE AN-
GLO-SAX
TO THE
ENGLISH
LANGUAGE

The invasions of the Anglo-Saxons were more sanguinary and desolating. Their numbers never being formidable enough to intimidate opposition, or to subdue it by a blow, the natives every where struggled against them with perpetual hope and perpetual destruction. The Angles and Saxons eagerly flocked in successive colonies into the island, till some of their ancient seats on the Continent were deserted, and England became overspread with an Anglo-Saxon population. Such were their numbers, and such was the consumption of the ancient Britons, that from the firth of Forth to the coasts of Kent and Suffolk, the British language disappeared, except from Wales, the peninsula of Cornwall, and a small district in Cumberland. All the rest of the island, from the Scottish firths, had no other language than the Saxon; and this was so completely established in every part, at least of England, that the names of its fields, boundaries, villages, and towns, became almost universally Saxon; and as such all the grants of land are described in the numerous Saxon charters which still exist.

As the Danish invasions were prevented by the exertions of Alfred from overpowering the Anglo-Saxon nation, they did not change its language; but

² The Cornish differs from the Welsh only as a dialect. The Bas Bretagne was originally the same; but the people who spoke it having emigrated from Britain many centuries ago, and having undergone several vicissitudes of fortune, it now exhibits great diversities. And yet, when we attacked St. Malo in the reign of George II. it was stated that the Welsh and the Bretons understood each others conversations.

BOOK

IX.

ENGLISH
LANGUAGE
AND PROSE
COMPOSITION.

their numerous settlers in Northumbria and East Anglia left some verbal effects. Even the dynasty of Canute made no material alteration of the Anglo-Saxon tongue. Danish may have been the fashion of the court under that sovereign and his two sons; but the reign of Edward the Confessor restored the predominance of the Saxon; and when the Normans entered the island, the Anglo-Saxon was its vernacular speech.

The fury and perseverance of the revolts of the English against William and his followers, produced in the Norman mind an abhorrence of both the people of England and their language. William had at first endeavored to learn the Saxon,³ but his age and occupations interfered with his desire; and the English continuing thro the largest portion of his reign, to shew themselves his bitter and implacable enemies, he banished their language from his legislation, from his palace, and courts of law. His Norman nobility and prelates equally disclaimed it; and even in all the public schools it was discountenanced, and the grammar was taught in Norman French.⁴ The consequence was, that from the Conqueror to Edward the Third, the Norman French was the language of the court, the great, the upper clergy, and the law, and, during the first reigns after

³ Hist. England, vol. i. p. 81. This effort for acquiring popularity may account for some of his precepts being in Anglo-Saxon.

⁴ Hist. Ingulf. p. 70.—The Anglo-Saxon hand-writing, which, after the reign of Alfred, had given way to the fashion introduced in his reign of the less readable French hand, was disliked and disused by all the Norman-French. Ib. p. 85. In 1091, the Anglo-Saxon writing had become so obsolete, that only a few old men could read it. Ingulf directed some young men to be taught it, that his monks might be able to read, and defend their charters against all assailants. Ib. p. 98.

the Conquest, of all the literature of the nation that was not in Latin. CHAP. I.

The Roman conquest of Gaul had been as destructive to its native languages, as the Anglo-Saxon victories to that of England. The Latin language and literature spread over the country; in some parts cultivated so much as to rival Rome itself; and it had become so firmly established in the minds and habits of the natives, that when the Franks subjected it to their empire, they were unable to give their language a national preponderance. Charlemagne, and his son and grandson, spoke the Franco-Theotisc, a branch of the great Gothic tree, which had rooted its seeds from the Rhine to the Vistula. But in the tenth century, that mixed language, which we call Norman French, had become the language of the larger part of France; while its kindred tongue, the Provençal, became established in its southern districts, where it still survives.⁵

TRANSI-
TION FROM
THE AN-
GLO-SAXON
TO THE
ENGLISH
LANGUAGE

The Northmen who settled under Rollo in Normandy, lost, within a century, their Scandinavian tongue, and adopted that corruption or alteration of the Latin language, which was, in the tenth and eleventh century, called the Roman. This rapid change may have been occasioned by the settlers whom Rollo invited into his dominions; by the marriages of his Northmen with French women, who communicated their language to their children; and by the French clergy, who became the religious and literary instructors of his countrymen and their ruling ecclesiastics; and by the desire of Rollo, to increase

⁵ See the Provençal tale and poetry, published in 'Le Troubadour,' by Fabre d'Olivet, Paris, 1803, who speaks of himself as having learnt the language from the lips of his mother.

BOOK
IX.ENGLISH
LANGUAGE
AND PROSE
COMPOSITION.

the civilization of his subjects, by leading them to a disuse of their native speech, which was so much connected with their wilder habits and ideas. Hence, while their neighbors, the Bas-Bretons, more national, and at the same time less social and civilized, kept apart from the natives of the Continent where they settled, and thereby preserved their ancient tongue in the districts they occupied, the Normans, in the generations after Rollo, willingly abandoned their barbarous Runic for the more cultivated and dissimilar French, to the great advantage of their intellectual advancement.

In the review of the structure and mechanism of the Anglo-Saxon language, printed in a preceding Work, the principles were explained on which it appeared to have been formed. This explanation was founded on the principles intimated in Mr. Tooke's *Diversions of Purley*, a book which first opened our view to a just philosophy of language—with several extensions and modifications suggested by a careful inspection of our ancient tongue. As these principles have been stated at some length in the work referred to, it will be superfluous to repeat them here.*

We have there remarked the conversion of nouns-substantive into verbs and adjectives, and of all these into adverbs; the formation of the articles; the abbreviation of some of the verbs into conjunctions, prepositions, and interjections; the application of some nouns also to the same purpose; and the composition of new sets of derivative substantives, verbs, adjectives, and other particles, from primitive ones. These changes are among the most curious parts of

* See History of the Anglo-Saxons, in its book and chapters on the Saxon language.

the history of language. It was also shewn how much the Anglo-Saxon language illustrates this progress in itself. But these formations are only to be inferred from the state in which it now appears: we have no history of the actual process which it has undergone. When the Anglo-Saxons came into England, they came with their language abundantly organized in these respects. They had been a busy and an active people for some centuries before the first written document of their language, that has descended to us, was composed. In all tongues, the main abbreviations and forms of language seem to have been made in the daily intercourse and business of life, before literature began. Language rather shapes literature, than literature language. The busy world creates the phrases, which the student uses. Writers may prune and polish them, and sometimes multiply; but they never improve language in its forming stages, so much as the active, talking public, ever thinking and discoursing, tho rarely composing.

In our present account of the history of the English language, we have therefore not to account for its primitive formation. Our duty will be to describe its transition from the Anglo-Saxon, which has become a dead language, to the ancient English of the fourteenth century; which, tho not actually our living tongue, yet is so much like it, that, with a small degree of attention, we may read and understand Wicliffe's New Testament,⁷ nearly as well as our common one. His other English, indeed, is not quite so perspicuous; but if we may judge from his Latin Trialogus,

CHAP
I.

TRANSI-
TION FROM
THE AN-
GIO-SAXON
TO THE
ENGLISH
LANGUAGE

⁷ Mr. Baber's republication of this translation, in 1810, is an acceptable work. He has made it more valuable by his Life of Wicliffe, and a fuller catalogue of his works than I have elsewhere seen.

BOOK
IX.ENGLISH
LANGUAGE
AND PROSE
COMPOSITION.

we may believe that our venerable reformer was more illustrious for the strength of his head and the justness of his ideas, than for the force or lucidity of his style. The scholastic studies, tho they exercised the mind, yet, being conversant with words, not things, darkened its language. Thomas Aquinas has the rare merit of combining great perspicuity and purity of expression with all the refined distinctions and speculations of the schoolman, while Peter Lombard and Duns Scotus are comparatively obscure. Wicliffe, like them, is neither classical in his Latin, nor clear or vigorous in his usual elocution. His English partakes of the imperfection of his Latin diction, in all his works but the Scriptures, and there the unrivalled combination of force, simplicity, devout compactness, dignity and feeling, in the original, compel his old English, as they seem to do every other language into which they are translated, to be clear, interesting, and energetic.*

A position of their words out of the natural order of their meaning, and thus delaying unnecessarily their comprehension, was the habit of the Anglo-Saxon writers. The first beauty of language is to communicate the thought correctly; the next, to convey every part of it as rapidly as the mind that hears can comprehend it. But the latter effect is prevented, and

* There is something remarkable in the composition of the Jewish and Christian Scriptures, that altho in every language they are the easiest book to a learner, they are yet dignified, interesting, and impressive. The Pentateuch, Psalms, and Gospels, unite, in a singular degree, simplicity and perspicuity, with force, energy and pathos. I cannot satisfy myself what the literary peculiarities, the felicities of language, are, which make them so universally comprehensible, and yet avoid insipidity, feebleness and tedium; which display so often such genuine eloquence and majesty; and yet are neither affected nor elaborate, nor, in general, above the understanding of the commonest reader. They carry to all nations and ages an indestructible internal evidence of their superior origin.

the former frequently confused, in every language, in which the words do not follow each other, in the natural stream of the thought. The Latin language is as defective in this point as the Anglo-Saxon. The Romans, like their Spartan ancestors, disdained the grace of easy comprehension. As the natives of Lacedæmon affected an artificial brevity, the Romans adopted that unnatural dislocation of their words, which constitutes their classical composition; an arbitrary habit, which sometimes may contribute to rhetorical euphony, but which makes the construction difficult to learners, and always retards and frequently obscures the intelligibility of the sentence. In the Anglo-Saxon, the same practice, but without the rithmical effect, and with no selection for any purpose of strength or beauty, perpetually occurs. Sometimes the comparative adjective is postponed, sometimes the superlative,⁹ and sometimes the verb;¹⁰ even twice in the same sentence.¹¹ If two verbs occur, the auxiliary, which ought to have preceded, is placed last.¹² Sometimes the verb is advanced, and its nominative cases are thrown back.¹³ The auxiliary verb is often separated

⁹ As—Thysum swithe gelic; To these very like—So—Men tha leo-feastan; Men the dearest. Saxon Homily, ap. Wanley Catal. p. 1 & 7.—The following are taken from one page of Wanley, to shew how habitual these peculiarities were.

¹⁰ Tha him lareowas secgan,
Syththan he to thysum life com,
We sceolon urne scyppend lufian.

Then to him teachers say,
Since he to this life came,
We should our maker love.

Wanley, ib. p. 1.

¹¹ Tha wolde God hi fordon; Then would God them destroy.—Wanl. ib. p. 1.

¹² Tha man for nytenesse misforan ne sceolon.

¹³ ⁊ feollan cyrcan and hus and comon wilde beran and wulfan.—Gelamp on anre byrig, the Vigerna is gecweden, micoel eorhststying.

BOOK
IX.ENGLISH
LANGUAGE
AND PROSE
COMPOSITION.

from its participle by intervening expressions, and the sentence is ended with the participle;¹⁴ and of two connected substantives, the genitive case first occurs; and the governing noun is postponed.¹⁵ These instances are sufficient to shew the peculiar and artificial style of the Anglo-Saxon prose, which occasions its humble meaning to linger with a drawling insipidity, making that which is always feeble still feebler, and diminishing its perspicuity.¹⁶

Another pervading character, was the use, and the inflection into cases, of the two articles, *the* and *a*¹⁷—also of its pronouns;¹⁸ and the partial conjugation of its verbs, especially in the imperfect tense.¹⁹ To this we may add its invariable use of inflections for the genitive case, both in the singular and in the plural.²⁰

¹⁴ Thæs cyninges botl wearth, mid heofendlicum fyre, forbærned.

¹⁵ ꝥ abitan thæs folces miccelne dæl.—Tha bead se biscop Manertus threora daga fæsten.

¹⁶ In all the Saxon prose authors we find this inversion. Thus in the Saxon Homily printed by Elstob: 'Indeed after of this pope the death—Then might not so yet the Roman city without a pope continue: But all the people the blessed Gregory to that distinction, unanimously chose.' p. 19. So the Saxon prayers in the Cotton Library, Julius A 2. printed at the end of Cedmon: 'Oh, of light, the light! Oh, of life, the joy—Oh Lord loved, I know my soul with sins is wounded—Of heaven, Lord—Of life the governor,' &c. So in the Saxon Liber Medicinalis, in the Bodleian Lib.: 'Of Egypt the king, Idpartus was called. To Octavianus the Cegar his friend health he prayed. In these words thus saying. In many concerns I am wise.' Wanley Catal. p. 75. Our royal Alfred equally uses it: 'This message, Augustin over the salt sea from the South brought.—I desired my true friends that they to me from of God the books on of holy men the manners and the wonders would write the following instruction.' Ib. pp. 70, 71. The above is the Saxon translated.

¹⁷ Thus of the definite article, which was certainly taken from the pronoun of their third person, we have the inflections—Se bisceop—to thære byrig—tham folce—thone hlaf.—And their article *an*, to express a thing, which is the numeral *one* turned into an article, is declined into—an anginn—anre byrig—anum witegan.

¹⁸ The first person will serve as an example—Ic, I—We, we, both of which the singular and plural decline.

¹⁹ See Hicckes' and Lye's Saxon Grammars.

²⁰ Thus in Cedmon we never have *of* for the genitive, but always an inflection of the governed noun, as—rodera weard; wereda wuldor; wuldres bearnum; engla threatas; heofena rices, &c. p. 1.

CHAP.

I.

TRANSI-
TION FROM
THE AN-
GLO-SAXON
TO THE
ENGLISH
LANGUAGE.

If we also recollect its uniform expression of our 'with' by its 'mid,' and the application of its 'with' to signify 'against'—its use of *mycel* for *much*; *swithe* for *very*; *swa swa* for *so as*; *se* for *he* and *the* and *that*; and *heo* for *she*; *hem* for *them*; *heora* for *their*; and *ure* for *our*; and that our substantives in *ness* are usually *mysse* in Saxon; and our adverbs ending in *ly*, are terminated in *lice* by our ancestors;²¹ if we keep these few characterizing circumstances in memory, tho they are not the whole of the peculiarities of the Anglo-Saxon, we shall be able to form some idea of the Anglo-Saxon style, and to understand some of the leading points of the changes which marked its transition into our present English.

The Anglo-Saxon syntax was also singularly anomalous and disorderly. Its prepositions were used as if possessed of the power of altering the cases of the nouns they governed, as our schoolboys know occurs in the Latin and Greek; but so irregular and capricious were the principles of this government, that in the same sentence the same preposition throws its connected substantives into four different cases.²² To the confusion of all regular grammar, almost all its prepositions have this inconceivable power.²³ With no less perversity, we find plural adjectives to singular substantives.²⁴ Sometimes the article and the adjective is inflected, and not the substantive;²⁵ and some-

²¹ Every Saxon work contains instances of all these circumstances.

²² Mid ealre thinnre heortan and mid eallum mode. MS. Horn. Wanley, p. 2.

²³ As on—on bocum; on thone timan; on anre byrig; on tham ærran behode. Also to—to thære byrig; to anum witegan—to sumum lareowe. Also be—be tham behstan bode; be þem sylfum; be sumes mannes.—Also with—mid beora bebreowsunga; mid fæder and halgum gaste; mid micelre gymene. MS. Sax. Wanley, pp. 1-3.

²⁴ Eallum mode—sumum lareowe—beofondlicum fyre. Ib.

²⁵ On tham ærran behode. Ib.

BOOK
IX.
—
GLISH
LANGUAGE
IN PROSE
IMPOSI-
TION.

times neither the article nor the substantive, but only the adjective.²⁶ That the substantive should agree with the adjective in either case²⁷ or number,²⁸ seems to have been quite a matter of chance; and whether nouns should be inflected at all, or into what case, was a question which no fixed rule appears to have decided.²⁹

That amid this confusion of grammar our worthy ancestors should have always correctly understood each other, may be reasonably doubted. The use of anomalies in language may be so uniform as to give the irregularity a definite meaning; and then, altho more troublesome to learn, yet, when learnt, they are as intelligible as regular conjugations. But the Saxon anomalies of grammar seem to have been so capricious and so confused, that their meaning must have been often rather conjectured than actually understood: and hence it is, that their poetry, especially in *Boewulf*, is often so unintelligible to us. There is no settled grammar to guarantee the meaning; we cannot guess so well nor so rapidly as they, who, talking every day in the same phrases, were familiar with their own

²⁶ *Tha godspellican lare.* MS. Sax. Wanley, pp. 1-3.

²⁷ Hence we have, *Thæs heofonlican rices and heofonlican fæder—on thisum dægtherlicum godspelle:—As well as, geleafullum mannum.* Ib. p. 3.

²⁸ On *thisum andweardum dæge—æfter thysum frecefullum lif—on anum westenne.* Tho we have also, *æfter twam dagum,* &c. Ib. pp. 4 & 5.

²⁹ Thus, to instance the word *apostle*, sometimes it is declined and sometimes not: We have, *se apostol; thone apostol; tham apostole; tham apostolum; his apostola; meran apostole; his apostolum; be apostolum; his apostolas; thæs apostoles,* &c. Wanley, pp. 4-8. So a confusion of cases occur on the word *dæg*, a day. We find, on *tham dæge; on thone dæge; on tham dagas; on thesse dæg; on thissum dagum; on thissum dæge; on thesse dæge; thisne dæg; on domes-dæge; on domes-dæg; on tham forme dæge; on there forman dæge; on midne dæg; on thone Wodnesdæg; on tham ærran dæge.* MS. ap. Wanley, pp. 14. 32, 33. 20. 19. 18. 22. 36, 37. 47. 49. 52. 57.

absurdities. Or perhaps when the harper recited, they often caught his meaning from his gesticulation; felt it when they did not understand it, and thought his obscurity to be the result of superior ability.

One natural consequence of these disorderly combinations of the inflections of the Anglo-Saxon language, was their gradual disuse. The confusion to which they led, could only be avoided by their ceasing to be significant. Becoming individually insignificant, their multiplicity was found inconvenient; the larger part were entirely dropped, and only those few were retained, of a determinate form and application, which our modern language still exhibits.

One of the first observable steps in the formation of English out of Saxon, was the discontinuance of the Anglo-Saxon inversions, and the use of a simple and more natural order of phrase. We are indebted to the Anglo-Normans for this improvement. Whether they were at first a duller people, who could not comprehend what was not plain and easy; or whether their ignorance of all literature occasioned them to adopt unconsciously a simple and natural style; or whether a superior acuteness led them instinctively to a better taste, in preference to the elaborate absurdities about them; yet it is certain that the Anglo-Norman writers are remarkable for their unaffected, plain, and comprehensible diction. Their words are usually placed as nature and meaning would station them; and they taught the Anglo-Saxons to untwist their phrases, to dismount from their incumbering stilts, and to think and speak as simply and as perspicuously as themselves.

As the Anglo-Saxon began to be affected by the Norman tongue, many other changes followed. The

CHAP.
I.

TRANSI-
TION FROM
THE AN-
GLO-SAXON
TO THE
ENGLISH
LANGUAGE

BOOK
IX.ENGLISH
LANGUAGE
AND PROSE
COMPOSITION.

declensions of the definite article, *se, seo, that*—were wholly laid aside; and its plural nominative, *tha*, changed into *the*, became universally used for every case, gender, and number. The simplification of a word so generally and incessantly wanted, seems to have been a great improvement.

The disuse of declensions in the substantives and adjectives, excepting in the genitive case, and one variation for the plural, was another alteration, also beneficial. The abolition of the terminal cases makes the language less monotonous, more simple, more pliable, and more precise.³⁰ Language only needs such inflections, when, as in the Latin, its words are unnaturally placed; and on the other hand, the dislocated position becomes a necessary evil when declensions are used, that a disagreeable monotony may be avoided.

The dual was also dropped in Saxon, as it is in Latin. It is retained in Greek; but it seems to be a distinction not wanted for any practical utility, and therefore incumbering instead of refining the language.

The conjugations of the Saxon verbs, which were never numerous, were gradually disused. One simple change only was retained, to mark the past tense; and this gradually lost all variations of persons or

³⁰ In Latin, the genitive and dative singular, and the nominative and vocative plural, of the first declension; the genitive singular, and nominative and vocative plural, of the second; the nominative and ablative singular of the first; the nominative, accusative, and vocative plural of the third; the nominatives, genitives, and vocatives, both singular and plural, of the fourth; and the nominative and vocatives, both singular and plural, and the accusative plural, of the fifth declension; have the same endings. So in the principal adjective, *bona* is the feminine nominative, vocative, and ablative singular; and also the neuter nominative, accusative, and vocative plural. Hence the precise meaning of none of these words can be understood from themselves, nor will their position express it; the sentence must be consulted to discover it. The Greek has similar imperfections.

number, except the second person singular, where one inflection is still retained.³¹

CHAI
I.

Many verbal changes followed in the other parts of the language. The 'mid' disappeared, and 'with' took its place; at the same time ceasing to signify 'against.' *Swa* became *so*, and *innan* diminished to *in*, or varied into the compound *into*; *tha tha* was exchanged for *when*; *tha* for *then*; *heo* for *she*. The *g* softened gradually to the *y*; and the *f* often to the *v*. *Hit* lost its aspirate; *Ich* at last became *I*; *cow*, *you*; *gan* lessened into *go*; *gif* to *if*; *hwa* became *who*; *swilc*, *such*; and several other alterations occurred, which need not be detailed here. The above remarks will give the reader an idea of the nature of the changes by which the Anglo-Saxon passed into English. It remains now to mark the chronology, and to give specimens of the transition.

TRANSI-
TION FRO
THE AN-
GLO-SAX
TO THE
ENGLISH
LANGUA

The Norman language never became familiar to the great body of the English people. Fifty years after the Conquest, it is intimated that the preaching of the Norman monks at Cambridge was not understood by their audience;³² and Robert of Gloucester, two centuries afterwards, remarks, that the unlearned population had kept their native speech.³³ The rapid

³¹ The numerous conjugations of the Greek verbs seem, like those of the Sanscrit, to be a collection of barbarous and cumbersome anomalies. Four inflections to express the past tense! I am aware that our scholars have elaborately studied to explore the fine shades and distinctions of meaning between the perfect and imperfect, and the first and second aorist. Their acknowledged failure may be taken as evidence, that what they search for did not exist. I suspect that they have arisen from the same language, having been used by many rude tribes, who became afterwards much intermixed. Some had used one tense, some the other, and the common practical language was at last compelled to retain all. The same remark is applicable to the several declensions of the Latin, Greek, and Sanscrit nouns.

³² Hist. Ingulf, p. 115.

³³ For if a man con no Frenche, men tell of them right lite:
But lowe men holden Engliche here kind speche zite.

OOK
IX.

ENGLISH
LANGUAGE
AND PROSE
COMPOSITION.

discontinuance of the French language in our literature, after the loss of Normandy, proves that it had never become popular in England. The many Saxon homilies written after the Conquest,³⁴ some Saxon laws,³⁵ and ecclesiastical canons,³⁶ and even translations of the Gospels and the Heptateuch,³⁷ prove that the Norman invasion did not extinguish the Anglo-Saxon tongue. That England preserved and used it nearly in its ancient idiom, to the death of Henry I. may be safely inferred from the style of the Saxon Chronicle.³⁸

After the reign of Henry I. the pure Anglo-Saxon began to diminish. In that part of the Saxon Chronicle which narrates the time of Stephen, we find many Anglo-Norman words.³⁹ It was natural that this reign should be an æra of change. The country was filled with foreign knights, contending in every part for the empress Mathilda, or for the reigning prince; and their diffusion, and the disorders com-

I wene in the world, ne is longe nether country none,
That ne holdeth his kinde speche but Englande alone.

Rob. Glouc.

³⁴ See the Saxon MS. in the Cambridge Library, cited by Wanley, pp. 128, 133, 160, 166; and also those in the Bodleian Library, which he has noticed, pp. 15, 36, 40; and in the Cotton Library, pp. 199, 206, &c.

³⁵ As in the Textus Roffensis. See Wanley, p. 273.

³⁶ See Bodleian MS. Wanley, p. 65.

³⁷ Bodleian MS. Wanley, pp. 76 & 67. Cotton MS. ib. 181.

³⁸ Thus in the year 1129, which was six years before Henry I. died, we find the genuine Saxon style. The verb precedes the nominative case, and follows its accusative. The article is *se*, and it is declined into the accusative case, *thone*; the verb is also inflected; *and* is used for *with*; the *swa swa* and the *tha tha* appear; also the double adverbs, *siththan*, *tha*, and the double negatives. See Sax. Chron. pp. 233, 234.

³⁹ As—and sworn the *pais* to halden, p. 243; *dide* God *justise*, 243; *diden* him there in prisun, 242; and *pineden* him alle the ilce *pining*, 240; and beget thare privileges, 240; he hadde get his *tresor*, 238; *¶* heold mycel *caritad* in the hus, 240; to laudes and *rentes*, 210; mid fele men, 241; the king at the standard, 241.

mōn to all civil wars, led to great changes in the vernacular speech. CHAP.
I.

In the next reign, that of Henry II. a material alteration of the ancient language took place, in the discontinuance of its unnatural inversions. This is perceptible in some of the homilies which Wanley refers to this period. In these we have several paragraphs written in the natural order of the sense.* We find also there the article *tha*, *theo*, used oftener than *seo*; and the orthography assuming a more modern shape.

TRANSLATION FROM
THE AN-
GLO-SAXON
TO THE
ENGLISH
LANGUAGE

In the "Ormulum," another composition nearly as ancient,⁴¹ the modernising process still more clearly appears; the order is more uniformly natural, the inflections are more unfrequent; the present phrases, *I should*, and *thou shalt*, begin to emerge; the *habbe* approaches so far to our *have*, as to be softened to *hafe*; and *with*, *the*, *to*, and *this*, are in visible use.⁴² The spelling of it is needlessly loaded with double consonants. As the letters of the MS. are in Runic characters, it was probably written in some of those parts of the island where the Danish colonies

* The natural order is very visible in this extract from the 14th homily, tho the words are Saxon: 'Wyrð writeras sæcgath thæt threo leodscipas beoþ iþaton India. Seo forme India lith to thære silhearwenæ rice. theo other lith to Medas ⁊ theo thridde to tham mycle garsecge. Theos thridde India hæth on ane sidæn theostru ⁊ on oþre thonne grimlice garsecge.' Wanley, p. 17.

⁴¹ The MS. states that it was so called from its author: 'Thiss boc iss nemmedd Orrmulum, forþthi tha Orm itt wrobbte.' It is in MS. in the Bodleian Library, Cod. Junii 1. See Wanley, p. 59. It is a paraphrase on the Gospels.

⁴² Of the natural order, one passage may be cited: 'Ice hafe sett her o thiss boc arang godspelles wordess, all thurh me selfenn manig word the rime swa to fillen; acc thu shalt findenn thatt min word egeþwhær thær itt is ekedd, magg heþpenn tha tha rædeun ett to sen and t'understandenn.' Wanley, p. 59.

BOOK
IX.ENGLISH
LANGUAGE
AND PROSE
COMPOSITION.

abounded, and from their ruder pronunciation its harsher orthography may have been derived.⁴³

In a treatise on the Passion of St. Margaret, written in the reign of John, or Henry III. the easy modern style may be immediately recognised, tho many of the Saxon words are still retained.⁴⁴ This therefore makes a visible stage of the transition of the language—Saxon words, but in natural order. In the book of Alfred's Proverbs, the advancing character is perceptible;⁴⁵ and in the pretty verses that have been often quoted, it so completely prevails, that we can scarcely fancy we are reading an antiquated composition.⁴⁶ In all these words, some of the other changes already alluded to may be easily traced.

Between the accession of Richard and that of Henry III. may be placed that great work, which may be considered as a land-mark in this transition of our language, as well because it displays all the main features of the change, as also because it leads us to

⁴³ Many modernising phrases appear: 'Ic hæfe don—after the litte witt thatt min drihhten hæfeth lenedd—thu thohltesst thattitt mihte'well—acc all' thurh Cristes hellpe—giff Ennglish folc forr lufe off Crest.' Wanley says the letters are Runic, p. 59. The name is Scandinavian. The double consonants make it appear more uncouth than it really is. It shews much of the Norman simplicity and euphony, and more connected and fuller meaning, in its phrase.

⁴⁴ Thus: 'Eftur ure Laurdes wine and his passiun and his death o rode and his ariste of deathe ant efter his upastihunge as he steah to heovene, weren monie martyrs wepine ba men and wumnen to deathes mislice idon for the nome of Drihtin.' Bib. Bodl. ap. Wanl. 79.

⁴⁵ See next Chapter, Note 18.

⁴⁶ Ic am elder thanne ic wes
A winter and ec a lore;
Ic ealdi more thanne ic dede,
Mi wit oghte to bi more.
Wel longe ich habbe child ibon,
A worde and a dede:
Thah ich to a wintre ald;
To gung ich em on rede.

Hickes's Gram. p. 222. Wanley, p. 268.

a knowlege of one of the most operating causes: I mean, Layamon's translation of the Brute of Wace, already noticed.⁴⁷ Layamon not only shews the change of the Anglo-Saxon inversion for the easy style and natural order of the Anglo-Norman, but also the introduction of many words from the latter. The rymed Life of Saint Margaret, noticed by Hickes in his Grammar, and from him by Dr. Johnson, is remarkable for a more advanced English style with more Norman words. Indeed, excepting in the Saxon terms, which it occasionally exhibits, it reads very much like our present idiom.⁴⁸

CHAP.
I.

TRANSLATION FROM
THE AN-
GLO-SAXON
TO THE
ENGLISH
LANGUAGE.

From the preceding instances, it will be seen that the transformation of the Anglo-Saxon into English, was progressively effected by the introduction of a natural and unaffected order in the position of the words; by the disuse of almost all of the declensions and conjugations; by the omission of the definite article, unless where wanted to point the precise meaning; by the gradual disuse of many Saxon words, and the adoption of others, taken sometimes from the related Northern tongues, at times directly from the

This poem also occurs in a MS. at Cambridge, ascribed by Wanley to the reigns of Henry II. or Richard I.; which contains also homilies that display the new English idiom forming, tho still retaining Saxon words: 'To dai is cumen the holi tid that me clepæth Advent. Thanked be ure Louerd Jesu Crist thit haveth isend. And hit lasteth thre wuke fulle and sum del more.' Wanley, p. 169.

⁴⁷ See before, p. 214.

⁴⁸ Here I mai tellen ou, wid wordes feire and swete,
The vie of one meidan, was hoten Maregrite—
He sende it into Asye, with *messagers* ful yere,
To a *norice* that hire wiste, children ahovede sevene—

He haved Auntiog to yeven ant to selle.

He *serve*de nitt ant day fendes in helle—

Sone wolde the *Sarezin* habben hire to wive.

He said to his *Serjants*, a maiden ic isee;

Faret somme of myne men, ant fatchet hire to me.

Hickes's Gramm. p. 225.

BOOK
IX.ENGLISH
LANGUAGE
AND PROSE-
COMPOSITION.

Latin, rarely from the Provençal, and most generally and abundantly from the Norman; by the substitution of new conjunctions, prepositions, adverbs, and interjections; by the abbreviation in many cases, and in some by combinations of ancient words; and by changes in their orthoëpy and orthography. It is remarkable what softness and euphony the Anglo-Normans introduced into their familiar pronunciation. By these verbal innovations combined with the improvements in the selection, rapidity, condensation, and conciseness of their diction, which naturally flowed from a superior cultivation of their intellectual habits and powers, that English language was formed, which, continually enriching itself with new expressions from other tongues; having allied itself with every art and science, and all the regions of literature; and having for many ages been used for every purpose of human action and thought, has now become inferior to none, and superior to most, in all those excellencies and utilities for which languages have been commended and preferred.

DURING THE MIDDLE AGES.

CHAP. II.

Specimens of the Progress of the English Language and Prose Composition, from the Writings or Specimens of the various Classes of Society.

THAT the language of our poetry attained an earlier cultivation than our prose, has been already observed. Most nations have experienced this effect, and most languages exemplify it. The passages cited from Layamon,¹ will shew the commencement of the change soon after 1200. Robert of Gloucester's account of Leir and his daughters, will exhibit its state about the year 1280.² The Tales inserted before, from Brunne's Manuel, display its style in 1303.³ The extracts from Hampole,⁴ and the Romances,⁵ are specimens of its state at the end of the reign of Edward III. The passages introduced from Gower⁶ and Chaucer,⁷ present the poetical language under Richard II. Of its style under Henry IV. John the Chaplain,⁸ and Occleve,⁹ have furnished instances. And the citations from Lydgate¹⁰ may be referred to the period of Henry V. and his son's infancy. Thus the reader has already had abundant specimens of the English language, in its poetry, in due succession, from the year 1200 to 1420, the inserted date of one of Lydgate's poems. Instead of repeating

¹ See before, pp. 214.

² See following Note, p. 443.

³ See before, pp. 219-30. The extracts given by Mr. Warton and Mr. Ellis, from Adam Davie, a poet who flourished about 1312, may be read also at this interval.

⁴ Ib. pp. 232.

⁵ Ib. p. 249.

⁶ Ib. pp. 302-13.

⁷ Ib. pp. 336-58.

⁸ Ib. pp. 365.

⁹ Ib. pp. 368.

¹⁰ Ib. pp. 373.

BOOK
IX.ENGLISH
LANGUAGE
AND PROSE
COMPOSITION.

these quotations in this chapter, we will request the reader to refer back to them as so many successive specimens of the progression and formation of the English language. The extracts from Barbour,¹¹ will exhibit its dialect in Scotland. It remains now to furnish some idea of the progress of our prose style.

We can mark the period of the disuse of the Norman language in England, and of the confirmed ascendancy of the English, with an accuracy rarely to be obtained on such a subject. Tho the natives had never, as Robert of Gloucester observes, abandoned their vernacular tongue, yet the court, the law, and the nobility, had disused it. In the beginning of the reign of Edward III. Holcot complains that children learned, first the French, and from that the Latin language, and that there was no regular instruction of youth in English.¹² So Higden, who died 1362, states, that boys in the schools were compelled to construe in French, and that the sons of nobles were, from their very cradles, instructed in the French idiom.¹³ Norman French, therefore, triumphed in the first part of the reign of Edward III.; and accordingly Gower wrote his sonnets in that language.

A change of fashion, however, was beginning. Rolle, who died in 1349, intimates, that the generality of the laity understood no language but the English;¹⁴ and the English versifier of the romance of Arthur and Merlin, asserts, that he knew many nobles who were ignorant of French.¹⁵ But the

¹¹ See the reign of Edward I. in vol. 2. c. 2.

¹² Holcot. Lect. in Lib. Sap. l. 2.

¹³ Higden Polych. l. 1. Gales' xv Script. Angl. p. 210.

¹⁴ See before, p. 233.

¹⁵ Mani noble have I seighe

That no Freynshe couthe seye.

Arthur and Merlin, ap. Scott. Tristrem, xxviii.

CHAP
II.PROGRESS
OF THE
ENGLISH
LANGUAGE
AND PROSE
COMPOSITION.

year 1362 became an æra of importance to the predominance and cultivation of the English language. An act of parliament passed in that year, recited that the French language was so unknown in England, that the parties to the law-suits which were tried in the courts of judicature, had no knowledge or understanding of what was said for or against them, because the counsel spoke French. It therefore ordered, that all causes should in future be pleaded, discussed, and adjudged in English.¹⁶ This valuable law made French no longer necessary to professional profit; and English so completely superseded its competitor, that in 1385, the old translator of Higden mentions, that at that time, in all the grammar-schools of England, the teaching of French was left off, and English substituted in its stead. He even names the patriotic instructors who first made this change.¹⁷ So that the reign of Edward III. was clearly the period of this revolution in our language, and it had become completely accomplished within nine years after that sovereign's death.

In collecting a chronological series of passages from our old prose writers, to shew the progress of the language, we may begin with the MS. of Alfred's Sayings, which Wanley places about the reign of Richard I.¹⁸ The year 1200 may be taken as near

¹⁶ Stat. 36 Edw. 3. c. 15.

¹⁷ Trevisa, in his translation of Higden, says, that John Cornwaile, a master of grammar, changed 'the lore in grammar scole,' and that Richard Pineriche learned the manner of teaching from him. See the passage in the following Note 25.

¹⁸ It was in MS. in the Cotton Library, Galba, A 19; but that copy is spoilt. It began thus:—'At Sifforde seten theines manie, fele Bliscopes, fele boc-lered, Erles prude, Cnichtet egliche. Ther was Erl Alfrich of the lage, swuthe wis, ec Alfrede, Engle hirde, Engle derling. On Engelonde he was king, hem he gan laren, swo hi heren mihten, hu hi here lif leden scholden. Alfrede he was on Engleond a king wel swithe

BOOK
IX.ENGLISH
LANGUAGE
AND PROSE
COMPOSITION.

the time of its composition. It consists chiefly of Saxon words, but it has much of the Norman easy order, softening of their pronunciation, abbreviation of their orthography, and style of phrase, tho with scarcely any Norman words. It therefore marks strikingly the first period of the transition of the Anglo-Saxon into English.

The style of Robert of Gloucester is so little like poetry, and his long lines approach so nearly to prose, that we may refer to an extract from his Chronicle as illustrating the state of our language in 1280. The attentive reader will observe a considerable deviation from the preceding specimen. Tho full of Saxonisms, it is yet more advanced towards our present English, than even Alfred's Proverbs. The innovating effects of the conversations and business

strong. he was king and clerik. wel he luvede Godes werch. he was wise on his word and war on his speche. He was the wisest man that was on Englelond.' Wanley, p. 231. Spelman gives a further extract in his *Life of Alfred*:

' Thus quath Alfred, Engle frofre; wolde ye nu liven and lusten yure louerd; he yu wolde wisen wiseliche thinges; hu ye mihten werlds wurthe-cipe welden and ec yure soule samne to Creste. Wise weren the cwethen the saide the king Alfred. Mildeliche I mune yu, mine dere frend, arme and edilede luvende, that ye all drede yure drihten Crist, luvend him and liden, for he is louerd of lif. He is one God over all goodnesse. He is one blisse over alle blessedness. He is one manne, milde maister, he, one folce fadre and frofre. He is one riht wis and riche king that hem ne scal be wane noht of his will, hwo him here on werlde, worthend and eth. Thus cwath Aluerd, Engle frofre. He mai no riht Cing ben—but he be hoc-lered, and wis o loage, and he hise writes wel icweme, and he cunne letres, locen himselve hu he scal his lond lageliche holden.'—The next passages contain some attempts to rime:

' Thus cwath Aluerd, Engle frofre, the Erl and te Atheling, tho ben under the Cing the lond to *leden*, mid lagelie *deden*, bothe the Clerik and te *Cniht*, demen evenliche *riht*: For after that te man *soweth*, therafter he scal *mowen*; and efr ilces mannes dom to his ogen dure charigeth:

' Thus cwath Aluerd; the Cniht behoveth, ceneleche to mowen, or to werce the lond of hunger and of heregong, that the Chureche have *grith*; and the Cherl be in *frith*, his sedes to *sowen*, hise medes to *mowen*, his plowes to driven to ure alre bilif. This is the Cnihtes lage to locen that it wel fare.' Spelman's *Alfred*, pp. 127, 128.

above half a century, are visible in the Chronicler's CHAP.
count of Leir and his daughters.¹⁹ II.

On the first part of Robert's story of Leir, he says—

Thre dogtren this kyng hadde, the eldest Gonorille,
The mydmost hatte Regan; the gongost Cordeille.
The fader hem lovede alle ynog, ac the gongost mest;
For heo was best and fairest, and to hautyenesse drow lest.
Tho the kyng to elde com, alle thre he brogte
Hys dogtren to fore hym, to wyte of here thoughte.
For he thohte hys kyndom dele among hem thre;
And lete hem ther with spousi, wel whare he mygte bi se.
To the eldest he seide first, 'Dogter ich bilde the,
Sey to me al clene thin herte, how muche thou lovest me.'

PROGRESS
OF THE
ENGLISH
LANGUAGE
AND PROSE
COMPOSITION.

'Myn heye Godes,' quoth this mayde, 'to wynnesse I take
echon,
That y love more in myn herte thi leve bodi one:
Than myn soule and my lyf, that in my bodi ys.'
Tho fader was tho glad ynow whan he herde this.
'My leve dogter,' he seide tho, 'for thou hast in love ydo
Myn olde lyf byfore this, and bifore thi soule also.
Ych wol the maria wel with the thridde part of my londe,
To the noblest bachelar, that thyn herte wol to stonde.'

The other sister having answered in a similar manner, Cordelia is
said:—

'Sire,' heo seyde, 'Y leve not that my sustren al soth seide.
Ac for me myself, ich wol soth segge of this dede.
Ych the love, as the mon that my fader ys;
And ever hadde y loved as my fader, and ever wole y wys.
And gef thou wolt get theruppe more asche and wyte of me;
Al the ende of love and the grond, ich wol segge the.
As muche as thou hast, as muche thou art worth y wys,
And so muche ich love the. Tho ende of love ys this.'

Robert, after describing Leir's anger with Cordelia; his dividing his
kingdom between his other daughters, and their subsequent ingratitude
him; thus describes the king's feelings, on being taunted by them with
poverty:

This word dude much sorwe this seli old kyng,
That atwytede hym and ys stat, that he nadde hym self nothing.
That word brak neg ys herte; and long he yt understod
That ys child atwiste ys poverté, that hadde al is god.

Leir then resolves to visit Cordelia, the daughter whom he had himself
ill treated:

In tho schip, as other prynces in gret pruyde he bihulde;
And he nadde mid hym bute twei men, hym thohte ys herte feld:
He thought on the noblei, that he hadde in ybe;
He wep; the terus rounde down; that deol it was to se.
Mid goxing and mid gret wop, thus bigan ys mone.
'Alas! alas! the luthur wate! that fylest me thus one;
That thus clene me bryngust adoun. Wyder schal y be brogt?

Leve

BOOK
IX.ENGLISH
LANGUAGE
AND PROSE
COMPOSITION.

The improvement which our prose style received from the cultivators of our vernacular poetry, is shewn in the prose works of the venerable Hermit of Hampole, whose poems we have already noticed, and who has not received his due portion of fame, for the activity of his intellect, and the utility of his works to our infant English. He wrote several professional compositions in prose; from one of which his "Crafte of Deyng," a passage may be cited,²⁰ illustrative of the last devotions recommended at that time.²¹ As Rolle died in 1349, he belongs to the reign of Edward II. and to the first part of Edward III. In the same MS. that contains this piece, is another prose work of the same period, and apparently by the same author, which, like the former, shews a lucid and flowing style. One passage, a simile, pursued at some length, may amuse.²² It is taken from

Leve dogter Cordeille! to sothe thou seidest me;
That as muche as ych hadde, y war worth. They ne levede the.
Awey! dogter Cordeille! Wyder schal ich now fle?
So much ich hadde the mysdo, that y ne dar the se.'

Rob. Glouc. pp. 29-35.

²⁰ It is a MS. in the British Museum, Bib. Reg. 17. C 18.

²¹ It is a MS. in the British Museum:—'Also afterwarde, with alle the instance and devocion that he may, with hert and mouth, let him cry to our blessed Lady Seynt Mary, that is moste spedefull and moste redy mene, and helpe of alle synfull men to God, seyng thus, 'O gloriouse Quene of heven! Modir of mercy and refuge of alle synfull men! reconcile me to thi swete Son my Lord Jhu, and pray for me, synfull wreche, to his gret mercy, that for love of the, swete Lady, he wolde foryeve me my synns.' Than lete hym prey to Aungelis and sey thus, 'Holy Aungels of heven! I besech you, that ye wold assiste to me, that shall now passe out of this worlde, and myghtyly deliver and kepe me from alle myne enemyes, and take my soule unto youre blissed company. And namely thou, gode blissed Aungell! that haste bene my contynuell keper, ordeynyd of God.' Than let hym pray the same wyse, devoutly, to all the apostilis, martiris, confessours and virgyns, and specially to the Seynt, which he loved and worshipped moste specially in his hele, that thai wyll help hym.' Hampole's MS. Bib. Reg. 17. C 18. p. 34.

²² 'The sevynth profet of tribulacion is, that it spredith abred or opynyth thyne hert to receyve the grace of God: for golde, with many strokys of the hammyr, spredith abrode a pece of golde or of silver, to mate a vessel for to put in wyne or precieuse liquore.—And considre, as the more

the 'twelve profits of tribulation.' We may place both these specimens about 1340. They shew a freedom of style and manner that would not disgrace the reign of Henry VIII. They prove that our English prose was then well formed.

CHAP
II.

PROGRESS
OF THE
ENGLISH
LANGUAGE
AND FORM
OF COMPO-
SITION.

Of English composition in the year 1356, we have an example in the curious work of sir John Mandeville. At the end of his "Voiage and Travaile," which he wrote in English as well as in Latin and French, he says, that he "fulfilled these thinges and put them in his book," in this year. An extract from his prologue and conclusion will shew sufficiently his style.²² He died at Liege in 1371. His book is

precieuse metalle is more ductible and obeynge to the strokes of the wylt-smyth; so the more precieuse and meke herte is more paciente in tribulacion. And alle thogh the sharp stroke of tribulacion tormenteth the, yet comforte the; for the goldsmyth, Alle-mychty God, hodyth the hammer of tribulacion in his bond, and knoweth full welles what thou maiste suffer, and mesurith hys smytynge after thi frele nature: he wille not thou be than as metalle in a boystros gobett, withoute spredynge of shape, as harde hertis bene without techyng—Ne wolle thou not be as an olde frynge pan, that for frelte of a litell stroke al to breste in manny brekynges. MS. Bib. Reg. 17. C 18. p. 19.

²² We oughte for to challenge the heritage, that oure fadre laste us, and do it out of bethene mennes bondes. But nowe pride, covetyse and envye han so enflawmed the hertes of lordes of the world, that thei are more besy for to disherite here neyghbores, more than for to challenge, or to conquere here righte heritage before seyde. And the comoun peple, that wolde putte here bodyes and here catelle, for to conquere our heritage, thei may not don it withouten the lordes. For a sembles of peple withouten a cheventeyn, or a chief lord, is as a flock of scheep withouten a scheppardie; the which departeth and desparpleth, and wyten never whedre to go. But wolde God, that the temporal lordes and alle worldly lordes weren al gode accord, and with the comen peple, wolden taken this holy viage over the see. Thanne I trowe wel, that within a lityl tyme, oure righte heritage before seyde scholde be reconseyled and put in the bondes of the righte heires of Jesu Crist.

And for als moche as it is longe tyme passed, that ther was no generale passage ne vyage over the see; and many men desiren for to here speke of the Holy Lond, and han thereof gret solace and comfort; I John Maundeville, knyght, alle be it I be not worthi, that was born in England, in the zeer of our Lord 1322, in the day of Seynt Michelle; and hidre to have ben longe tyme over the see, and have seyn, and gen thorghe manye diverse londes, and many provynces, kingdomes, and isles, and have passed thorghe Tartarye, Percy, Ermony the litylle and the grete; thorghe Lybdie, Caldee, and a gret partie of Ethiope; thorghe

BOOK
IX.ENGLISH
LANGUAGE
AND PROSE
COMPOSITION.

a singular medley, of ancient fables, his own observations, and his compilations from travellers who had preceded him.

In 1382, we have specimens of the common vulgar style of the populace, in the writings circulated among the mob at the time of the great insurrection in the reign of Richard II.²⁴ As they were meant to

Amazoyne, Inde the lesse and the more, a gret partie; and thorghe out many othere iles, that ben abouten Inde; where dwellen many dyverse folkes, and of dyverse maneres and lawyes, and of dyverse schappes of men. Of whiche londes and iles, I schalle speke more pleynly hereafte. And I schalle devise zou sum partie of thinges that there ben, whan time schalle ben, afte it may best come to my mynde; and specyally for hem, that wyll and are in purpos for to visite the holy citee of Jerusalem, and the holy places that are there aboute. And I schalle telle the weye, that thei schulle holden thidre. For I have often tymes passed and ryden the weye, with gode companye of many lordes. God be thonked.

And gee schulle understonde, that I have put this boke out of Latyn into Frensche, and translated it agen out of Frensche into Englyssche, that every man of my nacioun may undirstonde it. But lordes and knyghtes, and othere noble and worthi men, that conne Latyn but litylle, and han ben begonde the see, knowen and undirstonden, gif I erre in devisynge, for forgetynge, or elles; that thei mowe redresse it and amende it. For thinges passed out of longe tyme from a mannes mynde, or from his syght, turnen sone into forgetynge. Because that mynde of man ne may not ben comprehended ne witheldden, for the freelte of mankynde.—Voiage and Travaile, pp. 4-7. Printed from the Cotton MS. 1725-1727.

At the end of his book, he says, 'Now I am comen hom, mawgree myself, to reste: for gowtes, artetykes, that me distreynen, tho diffynen the ende of my labour, aenst my wille; God knowethe. And thus takynge solace in my wreeched reste, recordeynge the tyme passed, I have fulfilled theise thinges, and putte hem wryten in this boke, as it wolde come into my minde, the zeer of grace 1356, in the 34 zeer that I departed from oure countrees.' Ib. p. 383.

²⁴ Knyghton has preserved these political squibs of the day: 'Jakke Mylner asket helpe to turne his mylne aright. He hath grounden smal, smal; the Kings sone of heven, he schal pay for alle. Loke thy mylne go aryght, with the foure sayles, and the post stande in steadfastnesse. With ryght and with myght, with skyl and with wyll, lat myght helpe ryght; and skyl go before wyll, and ryght before myght, than goth oure mylne aryght. And if myght go before ryght, and wyll before skylle, than is oure mylne nry adyght.'

'Jakke Carter pryys gowe alle that ge make a gode ende of that ge have begunnen and doth wele, and ay, bettur and bettur: for at the even, men neryth the day. For if the ende be wele, than is alle wele. Lat Peres the plowman, my brother, duelle at home, and dyght us come,

affect the popular mind, they were of course composed in their ordinary language. They have however all the air of modern phrase, and are proofs, that our prose style was not exclusively formed by our writers, but arose amid the business and conversation of common life. Courts and colleges in former times deviated into affected diction. The ordinary classes of life are always natural, simple, and easy in their colloquial phrase, because they are not qualified to understand any other; and from such elements, a perspicuous and impressive style may most successfully be framed.

CHA
II.
—
PROSE
OF THE
ENGLISH
LANGUAGE
AND ITS
COMPO-
SITION.

As Wicliffe died in 1384, the specimens of his English style may be inserted in this place.²⁵ Tho at least fifty years later, it was not so cultivated as the hermit of Hampole's, nor even of some of his contemporaries. Whether this arose from his collegiate

and I will go with gowe and helpe that y may to dyghte youre mete and youre drynke, that ge none fayle. Lokke that Hobbe robbyoure be wele chastysed for lesyng of goure grace, for ge have gret nede to take God with gowe in alle goure dedes. For nowe is tyme to be war.'

'John Balle gretyth gow wele alle and doth gow to understonde, he bath rungen youre belle. Nowe ryght and myght, wylle and skylle. God spede every ydele.—Stonde manlyche togedyr in trowthe and helpe ge trowthe and trowthe schal helpe gowe. Now regneth pride in pris, and covetys is hold wys, and lecherye withouten shame, and glotonye withouten blame. Envy regneth with tresone, and slouth is taken in gret sesone.' Knyghton Chron. pp. 2637, 2638.

²⁵ 'On many maneris oure religious desteyven hemself in vanite: first they refreyne nought here mouthe in praiseris but forgeten to worche. As gif praiseris weren the beste thing, bi whiche men serven & plesen to God. On that other manere reigious ben veyn, whanne thei lerne here owne reulis and leven the reule that god gaf; and ocupien hem in this lore to seye and synge withouten book, as gif this pleside most to God. On the thridde manere thes ordris ben veyn, that prechen japis to begge better and to susteyne here cloistris and houses and other godes, that thei coveiten; and certes thes himpes failen here as mouled gras that were untiddid; for that gras moot nedis rote and fade—

'Knewen nought thes newe ordris and thes cloistris with newe houses and other rentis, that thei han founden what scholde move hem to love thus & leve relegioun, that God hath goven. It is a blasfeme and bileve however that men speken here.' Wicliffe's Postils, Claud. D 8. p. 145.

BOOK

IX.

ENGLISH
LANGUAGE
AND PROSE
COMPOSITION.

life, his scholastic studies, or some want of facility or fluency of thought, or clearness of his ideas, cannot be ascertained; but his Postils, which, being addressed to the people at large, ought to have been in the most familiar phrase, are not so well expressed, nor so immediately intelligible, as either Rolles, or those which follow. His translation, however of the Prodigal Son,²⁶ has all the merit of the best style of that time, and reads very interestingly in his venerable diction. Perhaps it would be difficult to make it unimpressive.

²⁶ 'A man hadde twey sones: and the yonger of hem seide to the fadir, 'Fadir! geve me the porcioun of catel that fallith to me;' and he departide to hem the catel. And not aftir manye dayes, whanne alle thingis weren gederid togider, the yongere sone wente forth in pilgrimage into a fer cuntree, and ther he wastide hise goodis in lyvyng lecherously. And after that he hadde endid alle thingis, a strong hungur was maad in that cuntree and he bigan to haue nede. And he wente and drough him to oon of the cyteseynes of that cuntree, and he scnte him into his toun, to feed swyn. And he coueitide to fille his wombe of the coddis that the hoggis eeten, and no man gaf him. And he turnede agen into himself: and seide, 'how manye hirid men in my fadir's hous had plente of looues: and I perisch here thorou hungur! I schal rise up and go to my fadir, and I schal seye to him: fadir I haue synned into heuene and bifore thee, and now I am not worthi to be clepid thi sone: make me as oon of thin hirid men.' And he roos up and cam to his fadir; and whanne he was yit afer, his fadir sigh him, and was stirid by mersy, and he ran, and fel on his necke, and kisside him. And the sone seide to him, 'fadir I haue synned into heuene and bifore thee: and now I am not worthi to be clepid thi sone.' And the fadir seide to his seruantis 'swithe bryng ye forth the first stole: and clothe ye him, and gyue ye a ryng in his hond: and schoon on hise feet. And bryng ye a fat calf and sleigh ye: and ete we, and make we feeste. For this my sone was deed, and hath lyued agen: he perischide, and is founden: and alle men bigunnen to ete. But his eldre sone was in the feeld; and whanne he cam, and neighede to the hous, he herde a symfonye and a croude. And he clepide oon of the seruantis: and axide what these thingis weren. And he seide to him, 'thi brother is comen: and thi fadir slough a fatt calf, for he resseyuede him saaf.' And he was wrooth, and wold not come yn: therfor his fadir gedde out: and bigan to preye him. And he answerde to his fadir: and seyde, 'lo so manye yeeris I serue thee: and I neuere brak thi comaundement and thou neuere gaue to me a kide that I with my frendis schulde haue etun. But aftir that this thi sone that hath deuourid his substance with hooris, cam, thou hast slayn to him a fat calf.' And he seide to him, 'sone thou art euermore with me: and alle my thingis ben thine. But it bihoft to make feest and to haue joye: for this thi brother was deed and lyuyde agen, he perischide and is founden.' Wicliffe's Test. Baber's ed. p. 76.

CHAP.
II.PROGRESS
OF THE
ENGLISH
LANGUAGE
AND PROSE
COMPOSITION.

In 1385, we have a specimen of an old Chroni-
cler's English, written in that year by Nich. Trevisa,
in the Prologue to his translation of Higden's Poly-
chronicon; which may be quoted not only for its
contributing to mark the chronological progress of
our language, but also for the information which it
affords on the decline of the French, and the ascen-
dency of the English tongue.²⁷ To this we may also
add an extract from his translation of the sermon of
the archbishop of Armagh, preached before the pope
at Avignon in 1357. It was chiefly directed against
the Mendicant Friars. The passage is interesting
for its information, that at one time 30,000 scholars
were studying at Oxford; and that the number had
become reduced to 6,000. It also implies the endea-
vour of the friars to excel the other clergy in their
libraries, and pupils.²⁸

²⁷ 'Children in scole agenst the usage and manir of all other nations
beeth compelled for to leve hire owne langage, & for to construe hir
lessons & hire thynges in Frensche; and so they haveth seethe Normans
came first into Engeland—Also gentilmen children beeth taught to speke
Frensche, from the tyme that they bith rokked in hire cradell and kunneth
speke and play with a childes boche; and uplondissche men will likne
himself to gentylmen, and fondith with greet besynesse for to speke
Frensche to be told of. This maner was moche used to for first deth,
and is sith some dele changed. For Iohn Cornewaile a maister of gram^r
changed the lore in grammer scole and construction of Frensche into
Englishe: and Richard Pencriche lernede the manere techynge of him,
as other men of Pencriche. So that now the yere of oure Lord a
thousand thre hundred and four score and five, and of the seconde kyng
Richard after the Conquest nyne and [in] alle the grammere scoles of
Engilond, children leveth Frensche and constrwth and learneth an En-
glische,' &c. Trevisa, Harl. MS. N^o 1900. He dates the conclusion of
his translation, 1387.

²⁸ In attacking the Mendicant Orders, for seducing children from their
parents, he says—

'Hereof cometh grete damage bothe to the peple and to the clergie also.
To the peple, for many men for what thei loveth best in this worlde, that
is her owne children. Also hit is grete damage to the clergie for now in
the Universitees of the rewme of Englonde: for children beth so ystole
from her fadres and modres, lewed men in everiche place withholdeth
her children, and sendeth hem nought to the Universite; for hem is lever
make him erthe tilyers, and have hem, than sende hem to the Universite
and lese hem. So that ghet in my tyme in the *Universite of Orenford*.

BOOK
IX.ENGLISH
LANGUAGE
AND PROSE
COMPOSITION.

In 1386, we have a curious instance of the style of the London tradesmen, in the petition of the mercers company to the king in parliament.²⁰ It

were thritty thousand scholers at ones: and now beth unnethe sire thousand. And me trowith that the grettist occasioun and cause why scholers beth so withdrawe; hit is for children beth so begiled and ystole. And y se noon gretter damage to al the clergie than in this damage.

Also there is more grete damage that undoth and distruyeth the seculars of al maner faculte, for those ordres of beggers, for endeles wynnynges that thei geteth by beggyng of the forseide privyleges of schriftes and sepultures and othere; thei beth now so multiplyed in coventes and in persons, that many men tellith that in general studies unnethe is yfounded to silying a profitable booke of the faculte of art, of dyvynyte, of lawe canoun, of phisik, other of lawe civile, but alle bookes beth ybought of freres. So that in everich covent of freres is a noble librarie and a grete; and so that everich frere that hath state in scole siche as thei beth now, hath an huge librarie. And also y sent of my sugettes to scole thre or foure persons; and hit is seide me that somme of hem beth come home agen, for thei myght nought fynde to selle oon gode bible, nother othere covenable bookes, hith semeth that herof schuld come siche an ende that no clergie schuld leve in holy chirche, but oonlich in freres; and so the feith of holy chirche were loste but oonlich in freres.

²⁰ The first paragraphs of this petition are as follows:—

‘To the moost noble and worthiest Lordes, moest ryghtful and wysest Conseille to owre lige Lorde the Kyng, compleynen, if it lyke to yow, the folk of the Mercerye of London, as a membre of the same Citee, of many wronges subtile, and also open oppressions, ydo to hem by longe tyme here before passed—

‘Of which oon was, where the eleccion of Mairaltie is to be to the fre men of the Citee, bi gode and paisible avys of the wysest and trewest, at o day in the yere frelich, there noughtwithstandyng the same fredam or fraunchise, Nichol Brembre wyth his upberers, prposed hym the yere next after John Northampton Mair of the same Citee, with stronge honde as it is ful knowen, and thourgh debate and strengere partye ageins the pees bifore purveyde was chosen Mair in destruccoon of many ryght. For, in the same yere, the foresaid Nichol, withouten nede, ayein the pees, made dyverse enarmynges bi day and eke bi nyght, and destruyd the Kynges trewe lyges, som with open slaughtre, som bi false emprisonment and som fledde the Citee for feere, as it is openlich knowen.

‘And so ferthermore, for to susteyne thise wronges, and many othere, the next yere after, the same Nichol ayeins the forsaide fredam and trewe cōes did crye openlich, that no man sholde come to chese her Mair, but such as were sompned, and tho that were sompned were of his ordynance and after his avys. And in the nyght next after folwyng, he did carye grete quantitee of armure to the Gyldehall, with which as wel strangers of the contree as othere of withinne were armed on the morwe, ayeins his own proclamacion, that was such that no man shulde be armed; and certain bushments were laide, that when free men of the Citee come to chese her Maire, breken up armed, cryyng with loud voice, Sle, Sle, folwing hem, wherthourgh the peple, for feere, fledde to houses, and other hidynges, as in londe of Werre adradde to be ded in cōe.’ Plac. Parl. vol. 3. p. 225.

shews that a good style was forming in the busy metropolis, and is one of the earliest petitions from the city to the parliament, that history has preserved.

In 1388, we have another indication of the style of the metropolis, in the sermons preached in that year at St. Paul's Cross, by 'maister Thomas Wymbilton.'³⁰ They prove that the Anglo-Saxon was disused, and that our present English was substantially formed. Being addressed to a London audience, they may be presumed to be in the usual diction of those to whom they were repeated. They shew the increased cultivation which our old English was receiving.

In the duke of Gloucester's written confession, taken in 1397, we have a specimen of the most polished style of the language at that period.³¹ As one

CHAP.
II.

PROGRESS
OF THE
ENGLISH
LANGUAGE
AND PROSE
COMPOSITION.

³⁰ These are in MS. in the British Museum. 'For right as ge seen, that in the tiliyng of the material vyne ther ben diverse labouris; for summe kutte away the voide braunchies; summe maken forkis and railes to bere up the vynes; and summe diggen away the olde eerthe from the roote and leven there fatter. And alle these officers ben so necessarie to the vyne, that gif ony of hem faile, it shal harme gretly or destroye the vyne. But the vyne be kut, it shal wexe wilde. But gif she be railed, she shal be overgoo with netles and weedis. But the roote be fattid with dunge, she for febilnesse shulde wexe bareyne.

'Rightsoo in the chirche been needful these thire officers. Preesthod, Knyghthod, and laboreris. To prestis it falleth, to kutte away the voide braunches of synnes with the swerd of her tunge. To knyghtis it falleth, to lette wronges and theftis to be doo; and to mayntene Goddis lawe and hem that ben techers thereof; and also to keepe the londe fro enemyes of oothere londes. And to laboreris it falleth, to travaille bodily; and with her soor swet, gete out of the eerthe the bodily lufode, for hem and for oothere parties: and there statis ben also needful to the chirche, that noon may wel be withouten oothere: for gif preshod lackide, the peepil, for defeaute of knowyng Goddis lawe, shulden wexe wilde on vices and dygoostli. And gif knyghthod lackede and men to rule the peepil bi lawe and hardnesse, theves and enemyes shulden so encrease, that no man shulde lyve in pees; and gif the laborers weren uot, both preestis and knyghtis mosten ben acremen and herdis, and ellis they shulden for defeaute of bodily sustenance dye.' Wymbilton's Sermon, MS. Bib. Reg. 18. A 17.

³¹ The duke, before he was murdered, delivered it written, 'be his own honde' to the commissioner, who transmitted it to Richard II. The first part, and the last paragraph, will be a sufficient specimen:—

'I Thomas of Wodestok, the viii day of Septembre, the zeer of my Lord the Kyng on and twenty, bi the vertue of a commission of my Lord

BOOK

IX.

ENGLISH
LANGUAGE:
AND PROSE
COMPOSITION.

of the royal family, son of Edward III, and brother of the Black Prince, we have in his phrases an instance of the diction of an accomplished gentleman of his day; yet it certainly has not the ease and merit of some of the specimens which we have already introduced. It may have been the fashion to affect a style that should differ from the clear vulgar phrase.

The prose works of Chaucer claim to be noticed about this time. They are highly curious in many respects. They not only shew the prose style of a highly cultivated mind and poet, but they are spe-

the Kyng the same zeer directid to William Rykhill Justice, the which is comprehendid more pleynty in the forseid commission, knowleche, that I was on wyth steryng of other men to assente to the making of a commission; In the which commission I amonges other restreyned my Lord of his freedom, and toke upon me amonge other, Power Reall, trewly nought knowyng ne wytyng that tyme that I dede azeyns his estate ne his realte, as I dede after and do now. And forasmuche as I knew afterward that I hadde do wronge, and taken upon me more than me owght to do, I submytted to my Lord, and cryed hym mercy and grace, and zet do als lowlych and as mekely as any man may, and putte me heygh and lowe in his mercy and in his grace, as he that always hath ben ful of mercy and of grace to all other.

Also, in that tyme that I came armed into my Lordes p'sence, and into his palais, howsoever that I dede it for drede of my lyf, I knowleche for certain that I dede evyll, and azeyns his regalie and his estate: Wherfor I submytt me lowly and mekely into his mercy and to his grace.

Also, in that that I took my Lordes lres of his messagers, and opened hem azeyns his leve, I knowleche that I dede evyll: Wherfor I putt me lowly in his grace.

Also, in that that I sclaudred my Loord, I knowleche that I dede evyll and wykkedly, in that that I spake it unto hym in sclauderouse wyse in audience of other folk. But by the wey that my sowle schall to, I mente none evyll therin. Nevertheles I wote and I knowleche that I dede evyll and unkunynghelych: Wherfor I submytt me heygh and lowe in his grace.

And therfor I beseche my lyege and souverayn Loord the Kyng, that he wyll of his heygh grace and benygnytee accepte me to his mercy and his grace, as I that putt my lyf, my body, and my goode holy at his wyll, as lowlych, as mekelych as any creature kan do or may do to his lyege Loord. Besechyng to his heygh Lordeschippe, that he wyll, for the passion that God soffred for all mankynde, and the compassion that he hadde of his Modir on the cros, and the pytie that he hadde of Marye Maudeleyne, that he wyll vouchesauf for to have compassion and pytie; and to accepte me unto his mercy and to his grace, as he that hathe ever bene ful of mercy and of grace to all his lyegees, and to all other that have nought bene so neygh unto hym as I have bene, thogh I be unworthy.
Plac. Parl. vol. 3. p. 379.

cimens of the "straunge English" which some complained of, and of that "ornate style," which he declares himself to have aimed at and valued. His "Testament of Love" is an instance, that scholars have sometimes spoiled language, instead of improving it. But as it is of no use to perpetuate the memory of his defects, because, as it has been remarked before, the age is more influenced by an author's beauties than by his faults; some of the happier passages of this great poet's prose style, in this work, will be transcribed in the notes.²² There is at

CHAP.
II.

PROGRESS
OF THE
ENGLISH
LANGUAGE
AND PROSE
COMPOSITION.

²² 'O Glorie! glorie! thou art none other thinge to thousands of folke but a great sweller of eares—

A wise gentill heart looketh after vertue and none other bodily joies alone—Is there any thing to thee more precious than thyself—Thou shalt have in thy power that, thou woldest never lose & that in no way may be taken fro thee—A soule dieth never. Vertue and goodnesse, evermore with the soule, endureth; & this knot is perfite blesse.

Glorie of fame in this worlde, is not but hindring of glory in time coming.—But if thou wolt make comparison to ever, what joy maiest thou have in yearthly name, it is a fair likenesse, a pees or one grayne of wheat, to a thousand ships full of corne charged. What nombre is betweene the one & the other? and yet mowe both they bee nombred, and end in rekenyng have.

Every wight in soche yearthly weale habundaunt, is hold noble, precious, benigne & wise to doe what he shall, in any degre that menne him set, all be it that the soth be in the contrary of all tho thinges. But he that can never so well him behave & hath vertue habundaunt, in manyfold manners; & be not wealthied with soche yearthly goodes, is hold for a foole & saied his wit is but sotted.

Gentilnesse in kindrede maken not gentil linage in succession, without desert of a mans owne selfe. Where is now the line of Alisaundre the noble, or els of Hector of Troie. Who is descended of right blood of lyne fro King Artour? Parde! Sir Perdicas whom that King Alisaundre made to been his heyre in Greece, was of no Kinges blood, his damie was a tombistere. Of what kinred been the gentils in our days. I trowe therefore if any good be in gentilesse, it is owely that it seemeth a maner of necessite bee input to gentilmen that they shoulde not varien fro the vertues of their auncesters. Certes all manner linage of men ben evenliche in birth, for one father maker of all goodness enformed hem all, & all mortall folke of one seed are greyned.

A wise gentill heart looketh after vertue and none other bodily joies alone.—Lo how ye been confounded with errour and folly. The knowing of very cause and way is goodnesse and vertue. Is there any thing to thee more precious than thyself? Thou shalt have in thy power, that thou wouldest never lese & that in no way may be taken fro thee—A soule dieth never. Vertue and goodnesse evermore with the soule

BOOK
IX.ENGLISH
LANGUAGE
AND PROSE
COMPOSITION.

times an eloquence about them, which announces a vigorous as well as a cultivated mind. As the style of every individual is most natural when he is talking of himself, the singular passage in which, like Cicero, he displays the pleasure he took in contemplating his own deserts, may be also added.³³

We have now presented the progress of our English language to the end of the fourteenth century. But to give a more expansive view of it, by shewing the style of the various ranks and classes of life, public as well as private, it will be useful to give an extract from the address of the parliamentary deputies to Richard, on announcing to him his deposition,³⁴ as

endureth and this knot is perfect blisse. Then this soule in this blisse, endesse shall enduren—And when the soule is the maister over the bodie, then is a manne maister of himselfe; and a manne to be a maister over himselfe, liveth in vertue and in goodnesse, and as reason of vertue teacheth.

They that sechen gold in greene trees, and wena to gader precious stones emoug vines, and laine her nettes in mountaynes to fishe, & thinke to hunt in deep seas after harte and hinde, and sechen in yearth thilke things that surmounteth heaven—What may I of him saie? But foolish ignorance misledeth.' Chaucer's Test. of Love, pp. 289. 279, 280. 282. 289, 290. Old ed.

³³ Chaucer thus discloses to us his own opinion of the merits of his Troilus, which he puts into the mouth of Love :—' I shall tell thee, this lesson to learne, myne owe true servaunt, the noble philosophicall poete, in Englishe, whyche evermore hym busieth and travaileth right sore, my name to encrease, wherefore all that willen me good, owe to doe him worship and reverence both; truly his better ne his pere, in schole of my rules coud I never fude. He in a treatise that he made of my servaunt Troylus, has this matter touched, and at the full this question assailed. Certainly his noble sayngs, can I not amend. In goodness of gentil, manlich speech, without any maner of nicitie of stafiers imagination, in wit and in good reason of sentence, he passeth al other makers. In the boke of Troylus, the answer to thy question maiest thou lerne, never the later, yet maie lightly thyne understanding, somdeale been learned, if thou have knowyng of these to fornsaid thynges, with that thou have understanding, of two, the last chapiters of this secunde boke, that is to saie, good to be some thing, and bad to want al maner being, for badde is nothyng els, but absence of good.' Test. of Love, book 3. p. 301. Chal. ed. p. 510.

³⁴ 'Sire, it is wele knowe to yowe, that ther was a parlement somond of all the States of the Reaume for to be at Westmynstre, and to begynne on the Teusday in the morn of the fest of Seint Michel the Archaungell

an instance of the language of some of the first men of the nation, in a situation that must have interested their sensibility. As a specimen of the highest diction of the country, on a most solemn and dignified

CHAP.
II.

PROGRESS
OF THE
ENGLISH
LANGUAGE
AND PROSE
COMPOSITION.

that was yesterday, by cause of the whiche sommons all the States of this londe were ther gadyrd, the whiche states hole made thes same persones that ben comen here to yowe nowe her Procuratours, and gafen hem full auctorite and power, and charged hem, for to say the wordes that we sall say to yowe in her name and on their behalve;—And so, Sire, thes wordes and the doying that we sall say to yowe is not onlych our wordes bot the wordes and the doynges of all the States of this loud and our charge and in her name.

And he answered and sayd that he wyste wele were that we nocht say bot os we were charged.

Sire, ye remembre yowe wele, that on Moneday in the fest of Seint Michell the Archaungell, ryght here in this chaumbre, and in what presence, ye renounsed and cessed of the state of Kyng and of Lordlesship and of all the dignite and wirshipp that longed thereto, and assoiled all your lieges of her ligeance and obesiance that longed to yowe, uppe the fourme that is contened in the same Renunciation and Cession, which ye redde yourself by your mouth, and affermed it by your othe and by your owne writing. Upon whiche ye made and ordeyned your Procuratours the Ersbysshopp of York and the Bysshopp of Hereford, for to notifie and declare in your name thes Renunciation and Cession at Westmynstre to all the States and all the people that was ther gadyrd by cause of the sommons forsayd. The whiche thus don yesterday by thes Lordes your Procuratours, and wele herde and understonden thes renunciation and cession were pleinelich and frelich accepted and fullich agreed by all the states and people forsayd. And over this, Sire, at the instance of all thes states and poeple ther ware certain articles of defautes in your governaunce redde there. And tho wele herd and pleinelich understonden to all the states forsaide, hem thought hem so trewe and so notorie and knowen, that by the causes and by mo other, os thei sayd, and havng consideration to your owne wordes in your owne renunciation and cession, that ye were not worthy, no sufficeant, ne able, for to governe for your owne demerites, os it is more pleinerlych contened therein, hem thought that was resonable and cause for to depose yowe, and her commissaries that thei made and ordeined, os it is of record ther, declared and decreed, and adjugged yowe for to be deposed and pryved, and in dede deposed yowe and pryved yowe of the astate of Kyng, and of the Lordeship contened in the renunciation and cession forsayd, and of all the dignitie and wyrshipp, and of all the administration that longed therto. And we, procuratours to all thes states and poeple forsayd, os we be charged by hem, and by hir autorite gyffen us, and in her name, yeld yowe uppe for all the states and poeple forsayd, Homage liege and fenute, and all ligeance, and all other bondes, charges, and services that long therto. And that non of all thes states and poeple, fro this tyme forward, ne bere yowe feyth, ne do yowe obeissance os to thar Kyng.

And he answered and seyde, that he loked not ther after: bot he sayde, that after all this he hoped that is Cosyn wolde be goode Lord to hym. Plac. Parl. vol. 3. p. 424.

BOOK
IX.

ENGLISH
LANGUAGE
AND PROSE
COMPOSITION.

occasion, we will add the speeches of the new sovereign, Henry IV. to the parliament, on his elevation to the crown.³⁵ Five years after, in 1404, we have the petition of the great earl of Northumberland to the king in parliament,³⁶ and the royal answer to the petition of the commons;³⁷ which will give a further view of the style of the highest ranks in the country. Our

³⁵ His words were, 'In the name of Fadir, Son, and Holy Gost, I Henry of Launcestre challenge this Rewme of Yngland, and the Corone with all the membres and the appurtenances, als I that am disendit be right lyne of the blode conying fro the gude Lorde Kyng Henry therde, and thorghe that ryght that God of his grace hath sent me, with helpe of my Kyn and of my frendes to recover it: the which Rewme was in poynt to be undone for defaut of Governance and undoyng of the gode Lawes.'—

In his second address he said, 'Sires, I thank God and yowe Spirituel and Temporel and all the Astates of the lend; and do yowe to wyte, it es noght my will that no man thynk that be waye of conquest I wold disherit any man of his heritage, franchises, or other rightes that hym aght to have, no put hym out of that, that he has and has had by the gude lawes and customes of the Rewme: Except thos persons that has ben agan the gude purpose and the commune profyt of the Rewme.' Plac. Parl. vol. 3. pp. 422, 423.

³⁶ 'To my most dredfull and Sovereigne lige Lord, I youre humble lige besече to yowre Hyness to have in remembrance my comyng to yowre worshipful presence into York of my free will, be yowre goodly letters, where I put me in yowre grace, as I that noght have kept yowre Lawys and Statutys as ligeance askith; and specially of gederyng of power, and gevyng of Liveries, as that tyme I put me in yowre grace, and yit do, ye seying and hit like to yowre Hyness, that al graceles sholde I nat go. Wherefore I besече vow, that yowre hygh grace be sene on me at this tyme: And of othir thynges which ye have examynynd me of, I have told yowe pleynly and of all I put me holy in yowre grace.' Plac. Parl. vol. 3. p. 524.

³⁷ 'And for als muche that the Comunes desiren that the Kyng shulde leve upon his owne, as gode reson asketh, and alle Estates thynken the same, the Kyng thanketh hem of here gode desire, willyng put it in execution als sone as he wel may. And bycause the Comunes desiren, that al that longed unto the Coroune the fourty yere of Kyng Edward, and sithe hath be departed, shulde be resumed, to that extent that the Kyng myght better leve of his owne: And for als muche that it may noght be knownen unto the Kyng which is of the Corowne, and whiche is not, withoute more examination, ne what hath be graunted sithe the fourty yere of Kyng Edward unto this tyme, the Kynges entent is, to assigne certeyn Lordes spirituel and certeyn Lordes temporell, and alle his Justices, and his Sergeantz, and othir suche as hym lust name, for to put in execution, als ferre as he may by the lawe of his land, or by his prerogatif, or libertee, all the articles contened in the Petition of the Comune, in all hast that he may, in discharge of his people.' Plac. Parl. vol. 3. p. 549.

specimens may be closed by some passages in the will of Henry v.³⁸ and by one of Caxton, printed by him in 1490, in the preface to his *Æneid*,³⁹ which bring down the history of our language to the end of the period to which these volumes are devoted.

CHAP.
II.
—
PROGRESS
OF THE
ENGLISH
LANGUAGE
AND PROSE
COMPOSITION.

THE reader has now before him, in these chapters, specimens of the language of all orders of individuals in England, from the termination of the twelfth century to the beginning of the fifteenth, of poets, chroniclers, divines, preachers, citizens, noblemen,

³⁸ It begins thus, 'In the worship of the blessed Trinite, of oure laide Saint Marie, and of alle the blessed company of Heven, I Henry, by the Grace of God Kyng of Yngland and of France, lord of Irland, atte making of these presentes lettres that ordeynet and dispozet to passe into the parties of France, to recover by help of God, my rightes there to me longyng, have do writte my wille and entente in manere aftr foloyng.'—After various bequests, he adds—'And if it so befallle that my forsaide brother Umfrey without heir mal of his body comyng departe out of this world, thanne I wol that alle the same castils, lordships, &c. and othir possessions so geven to my said brothir Umfray after his deceasse, noon heir mal of his body thenne beyng on lyve, remaigne to myn heirs Kynges of Yngland, and be annexet to the Corone of Yngland for ever more.—And if it so befallle that or my dettes be fully paid, and my last will playnly execut,' &c. *Royal and Noble Wills*, pp. 236-242.

³⁹ This work was a translation from the French, with this preface of his own remarks prefixed:—

'Fayn wolde I satysfye every man: and so to doo, toke an olde boke and redde therin. And certaynly the Englysshe was so rude and brood, that I coude not wele understande it. And also my lorde abbot of Westmynster ded do shewe to me late certayn evydences wryton in olde Englysshe for to reduce it in to our Englysshe now usid. And certaynly it was wryton in such wyse, that it was more lyke to Dutche than Englysshe. I coude not reduce ne bryng it to be understonden. And certaynly our langage, now used, varyeth from that which was used and spoken whan I was borne. For we Englysshe men ben borne under the domynacyon of the mone, whiche is never stedfaste, but ever waverynge: wexyng one season, and waneth and dyscreaseth another season. And that comyn Englysshe, that is spoken in one shyre, varyeth from another. Loo, what sholde a man in thyse dayes now wryte? Certaynly it is hard to playse every man, because of dyversite and chaunge of langage. For in these dayes every man, that is in any reputacyon in his countrie, wyll utter his commynycacyon, and maters in such maners and termes, that few men shall understonde thym. And som honest and grete clerkes have ben wyth me, and desired me to wryte the moste curyous termes that I coude fynde, and thus betwene playn, rude and curyous, I stande abasshed.' Caxton *Eneydos*.

BOOK
IX.ENGLISH
LANGUAGE
AND PROSE
COMPOSITION.
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princes of the blood, parliaments, and kings. These have been presented to him in chronological succession, that with his own eye he may be able to perceive the progress that was made, and the gradual changes which most contributed to produce it. In the passages that have been quoted, we see the vernacular prose composition of this period. The works referred to, form the most important part of our prose literature, and their authors were its principal composers. To add a long catalogue of the divines and schoolmen, who wrote Latin prose or verse, would contribute little to the history of the progressive mind of the country. It will be sufficient to refer to the ancient and modern works in which these writers have been biographically noticed. Of these, Boston, of Bury, in the fifteenth century,⁴⁰ Leland in the sixteenth;⁴¹ Bale and Pitts soon afterwards; and bishop Tanner, in his *Bibliotheca Monastica*, compiled in the last century; are the authors whose researches have been the most extensive and successful. But among these, Holcot, the Dominican friar, who flourished about 1330, deserves particular notice. He not only wrote some Latin Commentaries on part of the Scriptures, which are remarkable for the great range of classical authors whom he quotes, and for his repeated encomiums on knowledge and literature; but he also composed, under the name, and therefore most probably with the sanction, of the bishop of Durham, the English prelate to whom Petrarch addressed the letter which was never answered, the work entitled *Philo-biblon*;

⁴⁰ Tanner has given large extracts from this work, in the preface to his *Bibliotheca Monastica*.

⁴¹ Leland de Script. Brit.

the object of which peculiarly was, to excite a love of general study; an encouragement of new books; a desire to collect them; a taste for the liberal arts; indulgence for poetry; and an increased facility to students, to read the books that were obtained.⁴²

CHAP.

II.

PROGRESS
OF THE
ENGLISH
LANGUAGE
AND PROSE
COMPOSITION.

In considering the middle ages with respect to the progression of the human race, we must recollect that it is not the existence of one long-living and undying individual or generation that we are contemplating. It is not an Adam born 5833 years ago, who has been in life and action during all that time on this earth, and who has at last become what any of the classes of mankind now existing shew themselves to be. It has not been the system of the Creator that the world should be a continuing population of one never-dying nation. Having appointed that the earthly duration of every one should be ended by death at such a restricted period of life, that a new generation occurs every thirty, or as now, thirty-four years, the history of mankind is the history of nearly two hundred new generations; and their progress and attainments are those of so many distinct races and individuals, and not of one permanent population, adding to their individual minds all the successive effects of the experience, feelings and reasonings of 5000 years. The consequence of the adoption of this plan of human existence has

⁴² It is a MS. in the British Museum, Harleian, No. 492. Some of its chapters will shew its more remarkable subjects:—Ch. 1. That the treasure of wisdom lies chiefly in books:—Ch. 2. What love should reasonably be given to books:—Ch. 9. Tho' we ought to love the works of the ancients most, yet we ought not to condemn the study of the moderns:—Ch. 11. On the preference to books on the liberal arts:—Ch. 13. We should not entirely neglect the fables of the poets:—Ch. 15. The advantages of the love of books:—Ch. 16. How meritorious it is to write new books, and to renew old ones:—Ch. 18. That we should collect a great abundance of books, to the common profit of scholars, and not merely for our own pleasure:—Ch. 19. On the best mode of communicating our books to all students. MS. Harl. No. 492.

BOOK
IX.ENGLISH
LANGUAGE
AND PROSE
COMPOSITION.

been, that at various epochas, particular races have become, or been caused to be, prominent, have been formed into nations and states, and have been continued under their peculiar governments, institutions and manners, undergoing all the effects, and attaining all the improvements and deteriorations which they exhibit to the historical reader.

As soon as their progression had reached a point, beyond which no more appears, but decline and debasement begin; we see these left to decay and disappear, and some new race or state brought forward in their stead, and impelled or aided into predominance and advancement, until their melioration has become stationary. Corruption and degradation then appear, instead of progress; and national virtues give place to national vice and evil. Thus Babylon, thus Persia, thus Greece, thus Rome, successively ascended and fell, as soon as they each began to exhibit a deteriorating tendency. Hence, in England, the Anglo-Saxons displaced the enervated Romans; to be themselves, as they began to retrograde, conquered and depressed by the Anglo-Normans, whose predominance introduced a new spirit of intellect and virtue, which having never ceased to be progressive, has never been superseded by any other foreign race or power.

But, altho England as a nation has now exhibited a continuation of the same mixed population of Anglo-Normans and Anglo-Saxons, amalgamated into one general mass of Englishmen for the last eight hundred years; yet this continued population has been a succession of at least twenty-five distinct and new generations, tho all have flowed on from the same fountain races. It is still not the same individuals living for

seven hundred and sixty-three years, but twenty-five series of individuals, each having to grow up from babyhood in a moral and intellectual process, and dying away; to be followed by others who had also to pass thro the same personal progress: beginning always from the cradle, and giving way to their descendants as they completed their allotted and transitory maturity. The true way of estimating human progression, and the most correct mode of perceiving and displaying it, therefore, will be to put man against man; to compare the improved individuals of one series with the improved individuals of the next, until we reach our own generation; and by this means we shall attain a distinct view of the certainty, nature and gradation which every age comparatively exhibits.

CHAP.
II.

PROGRESS
OF THE
ENGLISH
LANGUAGE
AND PROSE
COMPOSITION.

END OF VOL. V.

INDEX.

INDEX.

- ABELARD**, one of the earliest supporters of the scholastic philosophy, iv. 458; his history and opinions, *ib.*
- Absolution*, its use in the Catholic church, v. 61.
- Acre*, besieged by the crusaders, i. 374; captured, 378.
- Adeliza*, daughter of the count of Louvain, married to Henry the First, i. 191; patronizes the Anglo-Norman vernacular poetry, iv. 201.
- Adhemar*, bishop of, embarks in the crusades, i. 335.
- Ægilius de Columna*, "the most profound doctor," iv. 472.
- Egidius*, Joannes, becomes a Dominican friar, v. 100.
- Afer*, Constantine, studies the sciences under the Saracens in Asia, iv. 377.
- Africa*, causes which have retarded its political improvement, i. 3.
- Agincourt*, battle of, ii. 437.
- Agriculture*, early promoted in Sweden, i. 33, *note*.
- Akrsboag*, the Norwegian name of Acre, ii. 4, *note*.
- Albemarle*, duke of, assists in the murder of the duke of Gloucester, ii. 311.
- Albert*, the Victorious, marquis of Austria, expels the Hungarians from his territories, i. 45.
- Albertus Magnus*, charged with studying necromancy, iii. 118; specimen of his writings, iv. 504.
- Albigenses*, crusade against them, i. 441; their derivation from the Paulicians of Armenia, v. 127; their zeal and morals, 122.
- Alchindi*, the Arabian philosopher, the variety and multiplicity of his works, iv. 391.
- Aldenberg*, its idolatrous worship, ii. 9.
- Alexander*, early romances on, iv. 254.
- III. king of Scotland, his death, ii. 68.
- Alexis Comnines*, the Grecian emperor, his treacherous conduct towards the crusaders, i. 331.
- Alexius*, the emperor of Greece, solicits assistance from the European powers against the Turks, i. 322.
- Alfred*, contributed to the maintenance of Christianity in Europe, i. 8. defeats Rollo in his attempt to invade England, 62; specimens taken from his "Sayings," v. 441.
- Al Gazel*, the Arabian philosopher, importance and celebrity of his works, iv. 393; analysis of his *Logica*, 406; on the universals, 491.

- Al Khatib*, the Arabian philosopher, his talents and celebrity, iv. 392.
- Alice*, sister of Philip king of France, betrothed to Richard, son of Henry the Second, i. 298.
- Alice Peers*, mistress of Edward the Third, her conduct towards him at the close of his life, ii. 238; accused before Parliament, and banished, 247, *note*.
- Almalasonta*, daughter of Theodoric, a favourer of letters, iv. 121.
- Almamon*, the Arabian caliph, encourages literature, iv. 352.
- Alp Arslan*, made king of the Turks, i. 307; his successes against the Christians of the East, *ib.*; his dying sentiments, *ib. note*.
- Alpharabius*, the Arabian philosopher, his talents and celebrity, iv. 392.
- Alphonso*, the first king of Portugal, his accession to the throne, i. 59.
- king of Castile, submits his dispute with Sancho, king of Navarre, to the mediation of Henry the Second, i. 299, *note*.
- Anbeame Hill*, seat of the encampments of Richard the Third, before the battle of Bosworth Field, iii. 518.
- Andrew of Wyntoun*, account of, v. 379, *note*.
- Angli*, the, invade England, i. 5.
- Anglo-Norman* literature, its first productions, iv. 162.
- poetry, its character and style, 310.
- language, the parent of the present French, 314.
- Anglo-Saxon* language, its structure and character, v. 420; its transition into the English language, 421.
- poetry, its style and decline, iv. 307.
- Anglo-Saxons*, not curious after foreign manners, &c. i. 1.; their political relations circumscribed, 2; their state at the period of the Norman Conquest, 72; consequences of the conquest, as it affected their condition, 73; their disposition to cultivate letters, iv. 123; their Latin literature, 146; become eager for study, 153.
- Angus* of the Isles, assists Robert Bruce in his exile, ii. 107.
- Anjou*, Charles of, challenges the king of Arragon to a duel, ii. 117.
- Anne*, daughter of the earl of Warwick, crowned at Westminster as the queen of Richard the Third, iii. 435; her death, 501.
- a princess of Bohemia, married to Richard the Second, ii. 346.
- Anselm* appointed by William Rufus to the see of Canterbury, i. 151; his difference with the king, 152; espouses the cause of Pope Urban, 156; receives the pall from Rome, 157, *note*; quits England for Rome, against the king's commands, 157; his character, 162, *note*; attacked in Burgundy by a predatory baron, 462; promotes the revival of Latin literature in England, iv. 153.
- Antar*, the adventures of, an Arabic fable, iv. 403.
- Antioch* taken by the crusaders, i. 339.

- Aquinas*, Thomas, "the angelical doctor," iv. 472; specimen of his writings, 500.
- Aquitaine*, lost by the English, iii. 173.
- Arabian* sciences, history of their introduction into England, iv. 340.
- philosophers, chronological catalogue of, iv. 395, *note*; their subjects, 409.
- Arabians*, their conquests in Asia, Africa and Europe, iv. 344; the intellectual and moral benefits resulting from their successes, 345; their ancient literature, 347; cultivate the sciences, 351; and neglect the classical authors, 352; cultivate natural philosophy, 354; their intercourse with Christians, after their settlement in Spain, 370; their literary ladies, *ib.*; their literary caliphs, 371, 2; their intellectual character, 390; their natural history, 395; acquainted with the magnet, 397; arithmetic, *ib.*; gunpowder, 398; paper, 400; war, *ib.*; logic, 401; their rhetoric and fables, 402; subjects studied by their philosophers, 409; their logic, 461.
- Ardenne* Forest, its extent in the time of Cæsar, i. 47, *note*.
- Aristocracies*, contribute to uphold public freedom, i. 4.
- Aristotle*, his philosophy introduced into England, iv. 409; Analysis of Porphyry's Isagoge, or introduction to his philosophy, 411; his history and opinions, 418; Analysis of his Categories, 433; the aim and use of them, 439.
- Armagnacs*, a French political party, at the beginning of the fifteenth century, ii. 479.
- Arnolph*, emperor of Germany, admits the Hungarians into his territories, i. 18.
- Arragon*, the king of, challenged to a duel by Charles of Anjou, ii. 117.
- Arras*, congress at, to treat of peace between England and France, iii. 22.
- Artaveld*, Jacob Von, the brewer of Ghent, obtains the government of the city, and enters into alliance with Edward the Third, ii. 186.
- Arthur* and the Round Table, the romances upon, their origin, iv. 231.
- son of Geoffry, and nephew of Richard I. excluded from the throne of England by his uncle John, and becomes his prisoner, i. 406; his sudden death, *ib.*
- son of Henry the Seventh, born, iv. 59; married to Catherine, daughter of the king of Spain, 76, *note*, 88; his death, 76. 88.
- Arundel*, earl of, beheaded in the presence of Richard the Second, ii. 311.
- Sir Thomas, attainted by Richard the Third, iii. 493, *note*.
- archbishop, his violent proceedings against the Wicliffites, iii. 140.
- Asia*, causes which have retarded its political improvement, i. 3.

- Baliol the younger*, raised to the throne of Scotland, but immediately expelled from it, ii. 181; obtains it again, 182.
- Balle*, John, a priest, confined at Maidstone, for teaching doctrines like those of Wicliffe, and liberated by the populace, ii. 256; considered one of the first promulgators of the reformed opinions in England, v. 180.
- Banaster*, Ralph, betrays the duke of Buckingham to the agents of Richard the Third, iii. 479.
- Bannockburn*, the battle of, ii. 144.
- Barbazan* defeats the English and Burgundians, iii. 9.
- Bards*, Welsh, their massacre by Edward I. probably not an historical fact, ii. 57.
- Barnet*, the battle of, iii. 296.
- Barre*, Luke de, his cruel treatment by Henry the First, i. 193, *note*.
- Battavian* Islands, their condition in the time of Cæsar, i. 47.
- Batthenton*, the knight of, his depredations in the reign of Stephen, i. 203, *note*.
- Battle*, trial by, in use among the Jews, i. 433.
- Battle Abbey*, founded by William the Conqueror, i. 88, *note*.
- Bavaria*, its condition in the eleventh century, i. 46; seized by Leopold, marquis of Austria, 45, *note*.
- Bayeux*, taken by Rollo and the Northmen, i. 63.
- Beaufort*, cardinal, superintends the education of prince Henry of Monmouth, ii. 378. 384; orders the ashes of Joan of Arc to be thrown into the Seine, 599, *note*; his death, iii. 54.
- Beaumont*, lord, killed at the battle of Northampton, iii. 210.
- Beaus Desconus*, *le*, the romance of, v. 241.
- Bebelius*, his account of the state of Germany in 1501, ii. 24, *note*.
- Becket*, Thomas à, his origin and early history, i. 221, and *note*; made chancellor of England by Henry II. 223; his administration, *ib.*; loaded with honors by the king, 224; his familiarity with him, 225, *note*; his splendid mode of living, 226. 463; his journey to Paris, and ostentatious vanity, 227; made archbishop of Canterbury, 232; the remarkable change of his manners after he had accepted this dignity, 236; resigns the chancellorship, and begins to differ with the king, 238; resists the attempts to subject the clergy to the criminal tribunals, 240; his contest with the king, 242; tries to quit the kingdom, 248; impeached in the parliament held at Northampton, *ib.*; escapes to France, 254; his conduct abroad, 255; a reconciliation effected between him and the king in Normandy, 260; returns to England, and his subsequent hostilities, 264; conspiracy formed against his life, 266; murdered in his cathedral, 268; canonized as a martyr, 271.
- Bedford*, duke of, made regent of France, ii. 484; appointed protector during the minority of his nephew Henry the Sixth, 485; marries the sister of the duke of Burgundy, 490; defeats the French at the battle of Verneuil, 491; embarrassed by the

- conduct of his brother the duke of Gloucester, 493; orders the siege of Orleans, 511; after the successes of Joan of Arc, challenges the French king, 585; placed at the head of the English government, iii. 19; dies at Rouen, 24.
- Beaot* de Sainte More, his poems, early specimens of Anglo-Norman verse, iv. 224.
- Berengaria*, daughter of Sancho, king of Navarre, married in Sicily to Richard the First, i. 368; crowned queen of England, 369.
- Berenger*, duke of Friuli, contends for sovereign sway in Italy, i. 17. 22.
- Bergen*, in Norway, becomes an emporium of trade, under the patronage of Olave, i. 100, *note*.
- its early commercial celebrity, ii. 25.
- Berkeley*, Sir William, attainted by Richard the Third, iii. 493, *note*.
- Bernard de Vantadour*, a troubadour, his extravagant eulogies of Eleanor, queen of Henry the First, i. 217.
- Bernard*, Arnaud de Moncute, a troubadour, satirizes the pacific disposition of Henry the First, i. 220.
- Bertrand de Born*, his conduct and writings respecting Henry II. and his sons, i. 300; his poems, 358.
- Berwick* taken by storm by Edward the First, ii. 79.
- Berytus* taken by the crusaders, i. 344.
- Bexiers*, destroyed in the crusade against the Albigenses, i. 442.
- Biorn*, the iron ribbed, the northman, invades France, i. 62.
- Birca*, or Sigtun, a port of Sweden, its celebrity, i. 33, and *note*;
- its commerce in the ninth century, ii. 25.
- Bishoprics* of Germany, their condition in the eleventh century, i. 48.
- Bishops*, English, join in the depredations of the nobles, i. 458.
- Blackfriars*. See *Dominicans*.
- Blacks* in England in the eleventh century, i. 158, *note*.
- Blamanna*, ancient Norwegian name of the Moors, ii. 3, *note*.
- Blind Harry*. See "*Henry the Minstrel*."
- Blorcheath*, the battle of, iii. 200.
- Blunt*, Sir James, governor of Hammes, joins the party of the earl of Richmond against Richard the Third, iii. 498.
- Bohemia*, character of its inhabitants in the eleventh century, i. 42; its original population, *ib.*; its language and literature, 43; Bohemian poetry, ii. 27.
- Bohemian* reformers, crusade meditated against them by the bishop of Winchester, ii. 504.
- Bohemund*, prince of Tarentum, advises the crusades, i. 320; embarks with his followers for Asia, 333; taken prisoner by the Turks, 343.
- Boii*, the, of Bohemia, their contests with the Franks, i. 8; the first known inhabitants of Bohemia, 45, *note*; the ancestors of the Bavarians, 46, *note*.

- Boleslaus*, duke of Poland, invaded by and forced to make peace with Frederick Barbarossa, ii. 12.
- Bolingbroke*, Roger, executed for witchcraft, iii. 45.
- Bologna*, celebrated for the study of the civil law in the twelfth century, i. 222, *note*.
- Bonaparte*, his dethronement led to the restoration of the Bourbon dynasty, i. 22.
- Bonaventura*, "the seraphic doctor," iv. 472.
- Boniface*, one of the first Christian missionaries in Friesland, i. 47, *note*.
- Boniface de Castellane*, a troubadour, heads the revolt of Marseilles, and put to death, i. 435.
- Bonville*, lord, beheaded by queen Margaret, iii. 225, *note*.
- Borholm*, in the Baltic, visited by Greek merchants in the eleventh century, i. 39, *note*.
- Borysthenes*, a name of the Dneiper, i. 37, *note*; its etymology, *ib*.
- Bosworth Field*, the battle of, iii. 523.
- Bourbon* dynasty, founded by Hugh Capet, i. 22; restored, *ib*.
- Bourchier*, Sir John, left by the earl of Richmond as a hostage with the French king, for money borrowed of him, iv. 508.
- Sir Thomas, joins the party of the earl of Richmond, against Richard the Third, iii. 517.
- Bow*, the, its destructive use by the Turkish tribes, i. 336, *note*.
- Brabant*, its political condition in the eleventh century, i. 46.
- duke of, his quarrel with the duke of Gloucester respecting Jacqueline of Hainault, ii. 494.
- Brackenbury*, Sir Robert, killed in Bosworth Field, iii. 529.
- Bracy*, Piers de, embarks in the cause of the Lancastrians, under queen Margaret, iii. 235.
- Bradshaw*, Henry, his poems, v. 380.
- Brambre*, Nicholas, lord mayor of London, petitioned against by the companies, on account of his oppressive conduct, ii. 297; put to death, 302.
- Bremen*, made one of the Hanse towns, ii. 27.
- Bretagne*, duke of, favours the designs of the earl of Richmond, against Richard the Third, iii. 497.
- Bretigny*, the peace of, ii. 222.
- Brown*, Sir George, attainted by Richard the Third, iii. 493, *note*.
- Bruce*, his contest with Baliol for the crown of Scotland, ii. 70; his claim rejected by Edward the First, 74; his death, 76.
- Robert, appointed guardian of Scotland, ii. 94; surrenders to the English, 96; assassinates Comyn at Dumfries, 99; procures himself to be crowned king of Scotland, 101; his exile and sufferings, 104; his queen taken prisoner, 108; capture and execution of his brothers Alexander and Thomas, 114; takes Edinburgh, 143; defeats the English army under Edward II. at the battle of Bannockburn, 144; entrusts the command of his army against Edward the Third to the earl of

- Moray and Douglas, 169; his death, 178; commissions the earl of Douglas to convey his heart to Palestine, *ib. note*.
- Bruce*, David, king of Scotland, his forces under the regent defeated by Edward the Third, at the battle of Halidon Hill, ii. 181; defeated at the battle of Neville's Cross, 210; sent prisoner to the Tower of London, 214, *note*.
- Brunne*, Robert de, account of his poems, v. 218.
- Bruno of Cologne*, his character of Henry IV. of Germany, i. 48, *note*.
- Brunswick*, excluded from the Hanse confederation, ii. 26, *note*.
- the royal house of, its origin, ii. 10, *note*.
- Bryto*, Richard, conspires to kill Thomas à Becket, i. 266.
- Buchan*, earl of, constable of Scotland, commands the French army at the battle of Crevant, and is defeated, ii. 491.
- countess of, crowns Robert Bruce, as the representative of her brother, ii. 101; taken by the English, 110.
- Buckingham*, duke of, killed at the battle of Northampton, iii. 210.
- Henry, duke of, appointed to superintend the execution of Clarence, iii. 325; his history and character, 354; leagues with the duke of Gloucester, against lord Rivers, &c. 376, *note*; retires to Brecon after Richard's coronation, 439; conspires against him, 453; causes of his hostility, 467; his intention to claim the crown, 471; plans with Morton to place the earl of Richmond on the throne, 473; appears in open revolt, 477; deserted by his followers, 478; taken and beheaded, 479.
- Bulgarians*, their hostile treatment of the crusaders, i. 324.
- Burgundians*, the, invade Gaul, i. 5.
- Burgundy*, duke of, contends for the crown of France, ii. 391; procures the assassination of the duke of Orleans, 392; obtains the throne, but loses it immediately, *ib.*; enters into a treaty with Henry V. and acknowledges him to be the king of France, 464; assassinated by the dauphin of France, 466.
- duke of, challenges the duke of Gloucester to a duel in the affair of Jacqueline of Hainault, ii. 495; makes peace with Charles the Seventh, iii. 23; marries Margaret, sister of Edward the Fourth, 247; his death, 333.
- Burley*, Simon, one of the partizans of the duke of Ireland, put to death, ii. 303, *note*.
- Walter, "the perspicuous doctor," iv. 472.

C.

- Cabot*, John, patronized in his maritime expeditions by Henry the Seventh, iv. 103.
- Cade*, John, heads a popular insurrection in Kent, iii. 80; enters London, 83; causes Lord Say to be beheaded, 84; driven from London, 85; killed, *ib.*
- Cadoc*, the Welsh prince, surprised by the Normans, i. 112, *note*.

- Cuen* surrenders to the French, iii. 163.
- Calais*, surrender of, to Edward the Third, ii. 212.
- Caliphate*, its constitution, i. 304, *note*.
- Calmuks*, Dr. Clark's account of their food, i. 19, *note*.
- Cambridge*, earl of, conspires against Henry the Fifth, ii. 394.
- Canute*, forms an alliance with the Scandinavian states, i. 1.
- the Great, promotes the civilization of Denmark, i. 30; introduces English bishops to preach christianity, *ib.*; marries his daughter to the son of the emperor of Germany, 31; visits France and Italy, *ib.*
- Saint, king of Denmark, contributes to soften the fierceness of the Danish character, i. 31.
- Capet*. See *Hugh Capet*.
- Capitularies* of Charlemagne, i. 13, *note*.
- Carinthians*, their character in the eleventh century, i. 43.
- Carmelite* Friars, their conduct and influence in England, iii. 122.
- Casimir* the Great, king of Poland, annexes Russia to his kingdom, ii. 12.
- Catesby*, Sir William, a partisan of the duke of Gloucester, iii. 412; his promotions, 413; beheaded after the battle of Bosworth Field, 530.
- Cathari*, a religious sect, their derivation from the Paulicians, v. 127.
- Catherine*, daughter of Charles VI. of France, married to Henry the Fifth, ii. 465; her coronation, 466.
- daughter of the king of Spain, married to Arthur, son of Henry the Seventh, iv. 87; on his death, married to his brother prince Henry, 88.
- Caxton*, learns the art of printing in Flanders, iii. 248, *note*; establishes the first printing press in England, 329, *note*.
- Chandos*, a gentleman of Bretagne, created earl of Bath, iv. 53.
- Charlemagne*, represses the Avari and the Northmen, i. 11; importance of his reign in promoting the civilization of Europe, 12; acquires the use of letters, 13; his political arrangements, *ib.*; destroys the kingdom of the Lombards, 14; is crowned emperor of the West, *ib.*; invested with the sovereignty of Italy, by the Pope, *ib.*; moral character of his conquests, *ib.*; his empire attacked by the Northmen, 63.
- Turpin's History of, an early romance, iv. 243. See *Turpin*.
- Charles Martel*. See *Martel*.
- IV. or the Fair, King of France, ii. 32.
- V. of France, his prosperous reign, ii. 33.
- VI. assumes the personal government of France, ii. 391; distractions of the country during his reign, *ib.*; prepares an army to oppose Henry the Fifth, on his march from Harfleur to Calais, 429; defeated at the battle of Agincourt, 430, *et seq.*; his death, 483.

Charles, dauphin of France, his contests with the duke of Burgundy for the regency and crown, ii. 464; assassinates the duke, 465; his contests with Henry the Fifth, 466; crowned king of France, 484.

— VII. extent of his possessions on his accession, ii. 489; his forces defeated by the English at the battle of Crevant, 490; and again at the battle of Vernueil, 491; prepares for the defence of Orleans, 512; dissuaded by Agnes Sorrel from quitting France in despair, 522; his straits, from the progress of the English arms, 518; Joan of Arc introduced to him, 550; assents to her enterprise, 554; sends her to the relief of Orleans, 558; conducted by her to Rheims, and there crowned, 584; challenged by the duke of Bedford, 585; makes peace with the duke of Burgundy, iii. 23; expels the English from Paris, 25; renews the war and takes Rouen, 76; besieges and takes Caen, and expels the English from Normandy, 162; acquires Aquitaine from the English, 173.

— VIII. king of France, aids the earl of Richmond in his projected invasion of England, against Richard the Third, iii. 497; his hostilities against England in Flanders, iv. 81; marries the duchess of Bretagne, and annexes that province to France, 84; makes peace with England, 85.

— of Anjou, brother of St. Louis, made king of Naples and Sicily, ii. 31; perishes at sea, i. 451.

— king of Bohemia, made emperor of Germany, ii. 23.

— V. emperor of Germany, betrothed to the daughter of Henry the Seventh, iv. 89.

Chatterton, origin of his Rowley's poems, iv. 58, and *note*; further account of him, v. 389.

Chaucer, patronized by Richard the Second, ii. 342; made chief botiller by Henry the Fourth, 485; account of his life and poems, v. 323; specimen of his prose style, 453.

Cheney, Sir John, attainted by Richard the Third, iii. 493, *note*.

Chicheley, archbishop, the zealous champion of popery against the Wicliffites, iii. 141.

Chivalry, derived its origin from the establishment of Christianity, i. 26; from the Gothic nations, 470.

— in England, i. 453.

Christiana, a lady of the Scottish Isles, assists Robert Bruce, in his exile, ii. 115.

Christianity, its existence in Europe endangered by the Mohamedans and Pagans, i. 7; defended by the Franks, 8; its danger from the Hungarian invasion of Europe, 19; effects of its promulgation upon the civilization of Europe, 23; established in Russia, 24; Hungary, *ib.*; its danger, from the progress of the Turks in Asia, 310.

— its establishment promoted in Denmark, i. 30, *et seq.*; in Sweden, 32; established in Prussia, 42; Hungary, 43; Aus-

- tria, 44; introduced into Holland, &c. 46; embraced by the Normans, 70; introduced into Ireland by St. Patrick, 281.
- Christianity*, causes of the early corruption of its doctrines, v. 3; influence of Mohomedanism on, 118.
- Papal, its rise and establishment in England, v. 1.
- Chronicles* of the Anglo-Norman Monks, their character and value, iv. 170.
- Church* of England, state of its revenues, &c. in the early part of the fifteenth century, iii. 96; See *Hierarchy*; attacks on, by the parochial clergy, 127; state, and reform of, under Henry the Seventh, iv. 76.
- Cicero's* vituperations, iv. 130.
- Cimabue*, the father of modern painting, ii. 39.
- Cinque-Ports*, their fleet defeat a French fleet in a sanguinary engagement, ii. 76.
- Civil War* between the parties of York and Lancaster, beginning of, iii. 164.
- Civilization*, progress of, in Europe, from the Norman conquest, i. 28.
- Clarence*, duke of, son of Henry IV. invades France, ii. 364.
- earl of, brother of Edward the Fourth, marries the earl of Warwick's sister, iii. 248; conspires with the earl against Edward, 254; retreats with him to France, and joins quèen Margaret's party, 360; made lord lieutenant of Ireland, on the restoration of Henry the Sixth, 274; again espouses the cause of Edward, 290; arraigned of treason by the king, his brother, 325; privately put to death, 326.
- Clarendon*, Parliament held at, under Henry the Second, i. 243; the constitutions passed in it, 246.
- Classical* literature, its inadequacy to improve the world, iv. 124; its revival in England, 149.
- Classics*, Roman, their limited utility, iv. 176.
- Claude* of Turin, his attack upon images in the churches, &c. v. 122.
- Clergy* of England, permitted to marry by Henry First, i. 195; Henry the Second's measures to subject them to the criminal tribunals, 240; abuses arising from their previous exemptions, 241, and *note*; their conduct in the dispute between the King and Becket, 243; their public employments, iii. 131; their state at the accession of Edward the Fifth, 365; their resistance to the Pope, v. 148; measures of the English sovereigns to lessen their power, 150; their contests with the mendicant friars, 155; effects of their vices and luxury, 158; incited to write vernacular poetry, iv. 200.
- Norman, their beneficial influence in the civilization of England, i. 104.
- Clermont*, Council held at, on the subject of the crusades, i. 321.
- Clifford*, lord, killed at the first battle of St. Albans, iii. 188.
- lord (the young) appointed with the earl of Northumberland

- to the command of the north, *iii.* 204; murders the young lord Rutland, son of the duke of York, in cold blood, 218; killed near Ferrybridge, 228.
- Clothaire*, king of the Franks, makes war upon the Winedi, a nation of the Slavi, *i.* 5, *note*.
- Clovis*, king of the Franks, his conversion to Christianity, *i.* 8.
- Cniht*, the origin of the term knight, *i.* 471, *note*.
- Cobham*, lord. See *Oldcastle*.
- lord, espouses the cause of the duke of York, against Somerset, *iii.* 164.
- Eleanor, married to the duke of Gloucester, *ii.* 497.
- Colfox*, John, one of the murderers of the duke of Gloucester, *ii.* 311.
- Collingbourne*, executed for a pasquinade, and treasonable practices, in the reign of Richard the Third, *iii.* 492.
- Columbus*, Christopher, favorably received by Henry the Seventh, *iv.* 103.
- Colyns*, Christopher, a commander under Richard the Third, the question considered, whether he was Christopher Columbus, *iii.* 533, *note*.
- Como*, the republic of, subdued by the Milanese, *ii.* 33, *note*.
- Comyn*, John, heads the Scottish army into England, *ii.* 78; surrenders to the English, 96; assassinated by Robert Bruce, 99.
- Confession*, its use in the Catholic Church, *v.* 61.
- Conrad*, duke of Franconia, chosen emperor, *i.* 17; recommends his rival, Henry duke of Saxony, to be his successor, *ib.*
- III. emperor of Germany, leads a body of crusaders into Asia, which is destroyed by the sultan of Iconium, *i.* 344; reaches Jerusalem, 345, *note*.
- of Montserrat, takes Tyre from Saladin, *i.* 371; his contention with Guy for the kingdom of Palestine, and assassination at Tyre, 386.
- Consadine*, his execution by Charles of Anjou, censured, *ii.* 31, *note*.
- Constance*, the peace of, in 1183, by which the Lombard republics obtained an authorised existence, *ii.* 37.
- Constantine*, of Mananalis, becomes the founder of the Paulicians, *v.* 123.
- Constantinople* menaced by the Turks, *i.* 309.
- Cormac*, king and archbishop of Cashel, author of the Psalter of Cashel, *i.* 278, *note*.
- Coronation* of a Scottish king, the ceremony described, *ii.* 73.
- Councils*, national, their antiquity and use in the European states, *i.* 3.
- Counts*, their office under Charlemagne, *i.* 13; acquire territorial possessions, *ib.*
- Courland*, the inhabitants of, noted for their cruelty and augurial impostures, *i.* 41; consulted by other nations for their divinations, *ib.* *note*.

Corso, earl, assassinated by the English malcontents, because he would not join in the revolt against William I. i. 94. *See also*, *ib. note*.

Crema, the republic of, subdued by the Milanese, ii. 33, *note*.

Cremona, the republic of, its complaints of the encroachments of the Milanese, ii. 33.

Cressy, the battle of, ii. 206.

Crevant, the battle of, ii. 490.

Crispin, a Norman knight, leads the French troops against the English, at the battle of Audelay, i. 186.

Cromwell, lord, attempted assassination of, by Tailboys, iii. 58; slain at the battle of Barnet, 299, *note*.

Cross, origin of its use on the garments of the crusaders, i. 321.

Cross and *Crucifix*, on the use of, among Christians, v. 43.

Crusades, their origin and history, i. 302. 314; preceded by a spirit of pilgrimage, 316; encouraged by the popes and others, 320; councils held respecting them at Placentia and Clermont, 321; causes of their original defects, 322; first movement of the crusaders under Walter Sans-avoir, 324; their sufferings from the Bulgarians, *ib.*; second body of crusaders conducted by Peter the Hermit, 325; their slaughter by the Bulgarians, 326; defeat of the crusaders by the Turks, 327; a third body of crusaders conducted by Godescalus, *ib.*; a fourth body of crusaders commit various excesses, and murder the Jews in Germany, *ib.*; carry a goose and a goat, as objects of veneration, 328, *note*; their numbers and losses, 329, *note*; Godfrey of Bouillon conducts his followers to the crusades, 330; is followed by Bohemund, prince of Tarentum, 334; and the earl of Flanders, 335; Raymond, count of Provence, the bishop of Adhemar, Robert of Normandy, Stephen earl of Blois, &c. *ib.*; total number of the crusaders collected on the Asiatic shore of the Hellespont, *ib.*; they besiege and capture Nice, *ib.*; defeat the Turks at the battle of Doryldun, 337; take Antioch, 339; gain possession of Jerusalem, 341; fresh bodies led into Asia under Conrad III. emperor of Germany, and Louis VII. king of France, which are destroyed by the Turks, 344; the fortunes of the crusaders begin to decline, 346; attempt the conquest of Egypt, 347; Jerusalem taken from them by Saladin, 349; uses of the crusades, 350, and *note*; Richard the First of England and Philip of France proceed on a new crusade, 362; are followed by Frederick Barbarossa, emperor of Germany, 370; the crusaders take Tyre, and besiege Acre, 371; capture the latter city, 378; advance into Palestine under Richard the First, 380; defeat Saladin near Jaffa, 382; the brother of Henry III. of England assumes the cross, and writes an account of the crusades, 439, *note*.

— their adoption promoted by the conversion of the Hungarians to Christianity, i. 44.

- Digby*, Sir Simon, joins the earl of Richmond, iii. 518.
- Dighton*, John, one of the murderers of Edward the Fifth, and his brother, iii. 457; his confession, iv. 69.
- Dneiper*, the river, the seat of the early civilization of Russia, i. 37; called also, Borysthenes, *ib. note*.
- Dominic*, St., founds an order of preaching friars, v. 99; assists in the crusades against the Albigenses, 101; institutes the devotion of the Rosary, 102; the founder of the Inquisition, *ib.*
- Dominican* friars, their conduct and proceedings in England, iii. 115; found convents in England, v. 101.
- Dorset*, lord, created marquis of Dorset, iii. 38.
- lord Richard Grey, marquis of, his character and influence, iii. 348; takes the king's treasure out of the Tower, on the accession of Edward the Fifth, 378; appears in arms in favor of the earl of Richmond at Exeter, 477; attempts to quit the party of the earl of Richmond at Paris, but fails, 507; left as a hostage for money borrowed of the French king, 508.
- Doryldun*, the battle of, between the Turks and the Crusaders, i. 337.
- Douglas*, the baron of, assists Robert Bruce in his exile, ii. 105.
- earl, taken prisoner at the battle of Hamildon Hill, ii. 353; joins the conspiracy of the Percys, 359; taken captive at the battle of Shrewsbury, 360.
- Drama*, ancient English, rise of, v. 412.
- Drayton*, the rector of Snave, preaches against the popish doctrines, iii. 128.
- Dublin*, marquis of, first creation of the title, ii. 274, *note*.
- Duke* of Bavaria, antiquity of the title, i. 13, *note*.
- of Suabia, antiquity of the title, i. 13, *note*.
- Dukes*, their office under Charlemagne, i. 13; acquire territorial possessions, *ib.*
- Dunbar*, battle of, ii. 80; taken by the English army under the earl of Warrene, 81.
- William, his character as a poet, v. 348.
- Dunois*, a French commander under Joan of Arc, at the siege of Orleans, ii. 560.
- Duns Scotus*, John, "the most subtle doctor," iv. 472; on the Universals, 492.
- Durand*, "the most resolute doctor," iv. 472.

E.

- Ecclesiastical System* of England, origin and nature of, v. 1.
- Eclipse* of the sun in 1132, singular account of, i. 192, *note*; of the sun in 1178, some peculiar appearances attending it, 296, *note*.
- Edessa*, in Mesopotamia, a Christian principality founded there by count Baldwin of Boulogne, i. 341; taken by the Turks, 344.
- Edgar Atheling*, made king of England after the death of Harold, i. 83; deposed, 85; kindly treated at the court of William, 90;

flies to Scotland, 96; his sister marries king Malcolm, *ib.*; unites with the Danes in their invasion of England, 101; his liberal treatment by king William, 112; his sister's daughter married to Henry the First, 171; taken prisoner by Henry at Tenchebray, and liberated, 179, *note*.

Editha, the favourite of Harold, discovers his body on the field of battle, i. 84, *note*.

Edmund, son of Owen Tudor, created earl of Richmond, iv. 48.

— archbishop of Canterbury, account of his *Speculum Ecclesiæ*, v. 170.

Edward, son of Henry III. loses the battle of Evesham, i. 450; defeats the earl of Leicester, and releases his father, *ib.*; sails for Palestine on a crusade, takes Acre, and returns to England, 451; acts as a knight-errant in France, 460. See *Edward I.*

— I. his accession and temper, ii. 49; narrowly escapes being killed, 51, and *note*; praised by the Provençal poets for his successful chivalry, 52, and *note*; his combat at a tournament with the count of Savoy, *ib.*; his affection for his father, 53; leads an army into Palestine, and takes Nazareth, 54; his life attempted by an assassin, 55; the poison said to have been drawn with her lips from the wound by his queen Eleonora, 56; his return to England, and the honours paid him on the road, 57; his cruelty towards the Welsh princes, 64; his queen delivered of a son at Carnarvon castle, 65; his wars with Scotland, 67; death of his queen Eleonora, and the honours paid by him to her memory, 68, and *note*; makes war with the king of France in defence of Guienne, 77; marches into Scotland against Baliol, and takes Berwick by storm, 79; sends Baliol prisoner to the Tower of London, 81; obtains the submission of Scotland, *ib.*; the Scotch roused to arms against him by William Wallace, 83; his forces defeated at Stirling by Wallace, 88; commands an army in person against him, 90; wounded by his horse, 91; obtains a signal victory over Wallace at Falkirk, *ib.*; besieges and takes Stirling, and obtains the submission of the Scottish chiefs, 95; obtains possession of Wallace, and procures his execution in London for high treason, 97; his splendid military assembly at Westminster, preparatory to his marching an army into Scotland against Robert Bruce, 102; his vindictive conduct towards the Scottish queen and the countess of Buchan, 110; his cruelty to the Scottish nobles who adhered to Bruce, *ib.*; his death, 115; his contest with Philip Augustus for Flanders and Guienne, 116; makes peace with him, and marries his sister, 117; refuses to sanction a duel between the king of Arragon and Charles of Anjou, *ib.*; his internal regulations, 118; his personal character, 119; his affection for his mother, 120.

— II. born at Carnarvon castle, and created prince of Wales, ii. 65; accedes to the English throne, 128; early errors of

his reign, 129; recalls Piers de Gaveston, and makes him minister, 130; raises him to great honors, and thereby excites the discontent of the nobles, 132; marries the daughter of the king of France, 133; sends Gaveston into honourable banishment as viceroy of Ireland, 135; marries him to his niece, but is afterwards compelled to assent to his banishment, 136; his prerogatives over-ruled by the nobles, 137; compelled to abandon Gaveston to the barons, 139; his indignation at his murder, 142; marches into Scotland against Robert Bruce, 143; defeated at the battle of Bannockburn, 147; makes the Despensers his favourites, 148; conspiracy formed against him, headed by the queen, 153; cedes his French territories to his son Edward, 154; driven from London by the queen's troops, taken prisoner and sent to Kenilworth castle, 157; resigns his crown, *ib.*; murdered at Berkley castle, 160; his character, 161.

Edward III. born at Windsor, ii. 143, *note*; does homage to the king of France for the duchy of Aquitaine, 154; raised to the throne, 158; national improvements in his reign, 167; his first campaign against Scotland, 169; retreats without fighting, and makes peace, 178; marries Philippa, daughter of the count of Hainault, *ib.*; his chivalric taste, *ib.*; invades Scotland, and obtains a victory at Halidon Hill, 180; claims the crown of France, 182; makes alliances on the continent, to aid him in obtaining it by arms, 185; invades France, but retires without a battle, 187; his second campaign, 190; obtains a decided naval victory over the fleet of the French king, 191; attacks Tournay, 193; his third campaign, 195; invades France, 201; his retreat and dangers, 203; his victory at Cressy, 206; besieges Calais, 209; takes the town, 212; invades France from Calais, 221; his first reverses, 234; a parliamentary commission appointed to assist him in the government, 237; degrades himself with his mistress Alice Peers, 238; his death, and character, *ib.*; institutes the Order of the Garter, 241, *note*.

— the Black prince, made a knight, ii. 201; his gallant conduct at the battle of Cressy, 208; his campaign in Guienne, 214; gains the battle of Poitiers, and takes the French king John prisoner, 218; his noble conduct towards his captive, *ib.*; conducts him to London, 221; his letter on his victory, *ib.*; espouses the cause of Peter the Cruel, king of Castile, 223; reinstates him on his throne, 229; contracts a fatal disease in Spain, 231; takes Limoges by storm, with great slaughter, 232, *note*; his death, 235.

— lord March, son of the duke of York, retires to Calais, after the dispersion of his father's forces at Ludlow, iii. 204; with Warwick and Salisbury, leads an army to London, 207; his victory at the battle of Northampton, 210; becomes duke of York after the death of his father at the battle of Wakefield,

- 219; wins the battle of Mortimer's Cross, *ib.*; arrives in London, and made king under the title of Edward the Fourth, 222.
- Edward IV.* defeats the Lancastrian forces at the battle of Towton, iii. 228; crowned at Westminster, 232; defeats the forces of queen Margaret, in the north, 236; commotions raised in the country against him, 237; his private marriage with lady Elizabeth Grey, 242; gives umbrage to Warwick and other nobles by his proceedings after his marriage, 244; projects a war against France, 252; conspiracies formed against him by Warwick, &c. 255; taken prisoner by the earl, but liberated, 257; is reconciled to him, 258; obliged to retire to the continent, by the earl of Warwick, who had espoused the cause of Henry the Sixth, 270; collects a force in Holland, and lands in England, 278; received as king, after marching to Warwick, 289; arrives in London, and recovers his crown, 292; obtains a decisive victory over the forces of Henry, under the earl of Warwick, 296; defeats the queen's forces at the battle of Tewkesbury, 310; personally arraigns his brother Clarence of treason, before Parliament, 325; his compunctions after his brother's execution, 326; divided state of his court, 327; engages in hostilities against France, 329; makes peace with Louis, 332; his sudden death, 335; his character, 336; rules prescribed by him for the education of his son, 342, *note*; his daughters attend the court of Richard the Third, 494.
- V. his birth, iii. 272; state of the nobility, &c. at his accession, 348; divisions in the council, 374; falls into the hands of the duke of Gloucester, 383; arrives in London, and receives the oath of fealty from the peers, 386; takes up his residence in the Tower, 390; deposed by the duke of Gloucester, 426; murdered in the Tower with his brother, 457; their remains discovered, 458, *note*.
- prince, son of Henry VI. born, iii. 177; created prince of Wales, 181; killed at the battle of Tewkesbury, 313.
- son of Richard the Third, his death, iii. 496.
- Edwin*, aspires to the throne of England, after the death of Harold, i. 82; makes his submission to king William, 90; revolts, 95; perishes in his attempt to escape the perfidious attempts of William to seize his person, 106; respect paid to his memory, 107.
- Egremont*, lord, killed at the battle of Northampton, iii. 211.
- sir John, his insurrection against Henry the Seventh, and flight to Flanders, iv. 67.
- Egypt*, conquered by the Mohamedans, i. 302, *note*.
- Eirin*, an ancient name of Ireland, i. 274
- Eleanor*, (queen of Henry II.) her resentment against the king on account of his infidelity to her, and her consequent imprisonment, i. 295; the tale, of her presenting the poison and dagger to Rosamond, discredited, *ib. note*; released from her confinement by her son Richard the First, and entrusted by him with

the direction of the government during his absence in the crusades, 359; joins Richard at Messina, with the princess Berengaria, daughter of the king of Navarre, 368; her birth and marriage with Louis VII. v. 259; her conduct in Palestine, 260; refuses to entrap Saladin, 261; divorced from Louis, and marries Henry II. *ib.*; her courts of love, 263; and judgments in them, 265-7.

Electors of the German empire, their origin, i. 13.

Eleonora, queen of Edward I. said to have sucked the poison from the wound of her husband in Palestine, ii. 56; delivered of a son at Carnarvon castle, 65; her death and character, 68, and *note*.

Elizabeth, daughter of Edward IV. married to Henry the Seventh, iv. 54; her coronation, 67; her death and character, 89.

Ely, bishop of, justiciary under Richard the First, his character, i. 362.

Emare, the romance of, v. 241.

England, before the Norman invasion, rarely interfered in the affairs of the continent, i. 1.

— invaded by the Angli and Saxons, i. 5.

— praised for its fertility in the eleventh century, i. 91, *note*;
improved by the Norman conquest, 97, *see also note*.

English exiles withdrawing from the oppression of the Normans, in the reign of William I., enter the service of the Greek emperor, and settle in Greece, i. 92, and *note*.

— language, history of, to the middle of the fifteenth century, v. 420.

— poetry, history of, from the twelfth century to the middle of the fifteenth, v. 204.

— prose compositions, history of, to the middle of the fifteenth century, v. 420; chronological specimens, 439.

— romances, of the middle ages, their history and character, v. 238.

Eric, king of Denmark, marries the daughter of Henry IV. of England, ii. 8.

Escuyer, or Squire, meaning of the term, i. 468, *note*.

Estland, in Courland, the inhabitants of, sacrifice human victims to serpents and birds, i. 41.

Europe, progress of, to its state at the period of the Norman conquest, i. 1; causes which have contributed to its political and moral amelioration, 2; its political condition, at the fall of the Roman empire, 3; invaded by the Slavonian and Tartar tribes, 5; saved from Mohamedanism and idolatry by the Franks, 8, *et seq.*; idolatry of, 23; effects of Christianity in its civilization, 24; political state of, at the time of the Norman conquest, 28; state of, from the eleventh to the fourteenth century, ii. 1.

Eustace, count of Boulogne, defeated by the Norman forces of William I. in an attempt to take the castle of Dover, with the

- discontented English, i. 93; makes his peace with William, 94, *note*.
Eustace St. Pierre, his magnanimous conduct at the siege of Calais, ii. 212.
Evreux, William, count of, does homage to Henry I. for his county in Normandy, with the consent of Robert, i. 176, and *note*.
Exeter, besieged and taken from the discontented English, by the forces of William I. i. 95, and *note*.
 — baron of, his depredations in the reign of Stephen, i. 201, *note*.
 — duke of, takes arms against Edward the Fourth, iii. 233, *note*; escapes to the continent, and is reduced to great distress, 241.
 — duchess of, sister of Richard III., married to sir Thomas St. Leger, iii. 481.

F

- Faidit*, the troubadour, his poems, i. 358, *note*.
Falconbridge, lord, heads a division of the York forces at the battle of Northampton, iii. 210; again at Towton, 228.
 — son of lord Falconbridge, attempts to take London, iii. 315; submits to Edward the Fourth, 317; beheaded, *ib. note*.
Falones, a name given to the Scythians, i. 19, *note*.
Falsloff, sir John, defeats the French at the battle of Herrings, ii. 518.
Feast of Asses, account of, v. 113.
 — of Fools, account of, v. 112.
Ferdinand, Don, obtains the kingdom of Castile, i. 56.
Ferrers, lord, killed at the battle of Bosworth Field, iii. 459.
Festivals and Customs, Pagan, continued under Christianity, v. 111.
Figureira, Guillaume, a troubadour, his invectives against the court of Rome, on account of the crusade against the Albigenes, i. 446, *note*.
Finland, state of, from the eleventh to the fourteenth century, ii. 8.
Fitzosborne, William, incites William of Normandy to invade England, i. 91, *note*; left in charge of the kingdom during William's absence in Normandy, *ib.*; entrusted with the command of York by the king, 99; killed in Flanders, 114, *note*; his son's conspiracy against William the First, *ib.*; his defeat, and insolent conduct towards the king, 115, and *note*.
Fitz Stephens, Robert, invades Ireland, to assist Dermot king of Leinster, i. 291.
 — Thomas, wrecked on the coast of England with the young prince, son of Henry I. i. 189.
Fitz Urso, Reginald, conspires to kill Thomas à Becket, i. 266.
Fitzwalter, lord, defeated and slain at Ferrybridge, iii. 227.

- Flambard*. See *Ranulph*.
- Flanders*, its political condition in the eleventh century, i. 46; in the tenth century, 67; its early commercial celebrity, ii. 25.
 ——— earl of, leads a body of troops to the *crusades*, i. 335.
- Flemings*, colonies of, settled in Wales, ii. 59.
- Florence*, its early commercial celebrity, ii. 26. 39.
- Fogg*, sir John, attainted by Richard the Third, iii. 493, *note*.
- Folcott*, bishop of London, his letter relative to Becket, i. 234.
- Folquet*, the troubadour, his poems, i. 358.
- Fontenay*, battle of, its effect in weakening the Frankish nation, i. 16, *note*; 63.
- Footway* from the Baltic to Greece, in the eleventh century, i. 38.
- Formigny*, defeat of the English at the battle of, iii. 102.
- Forrest*, Miles, one of the murderers of Edward the Fifth and his brother, iii. 457.
- Fortescue*, sir John, joins the party of the earl of Richmond against Richard the Third, iii. 498.
- Fougeres*, in Normandy, disputes respecting the capture of, iii. 76.
- Fox*, a priest, joins the party of the earl of Richmond against Richard the Third, iii. 496, *note*.
- France*, kingdom of, its reduction under the successors of Charlemagne, i. 21; its early population and state, 50; its condition in the eleventh century, *ib.*; invaded by the Northmen, 62; state of, from the eleventh to the fourteenth century, ii. 30; state of parties in, at the close of the reign of Charles the Sixth, 464.
- Franceys*, one of the murderers of the duke of Gloucester, ii. 311.
- Franciscan friars*, their conduct and influence in England, iii. 119; found monasteries there, v. 105.
- Francis*, *St.* his life, v. 105; his Ode to the Sun, 386.
- Franks*, the, invade Gaul, i. 5; their settlement on the Scheld, Meuse, and Moselle, 8, *note*; their condition when they invaded Gaul, *ib.*; improved by their conversion to Christianity, 8; their successful contests with the Saxon and other tribes, *ib.*; their power weakened by civil dissensions, &c. 9; the territories first possessed by them, 8, *note*; their war with the Saxons of Germany, 10; their kingdom weakened by the divisions of the family of Charlemagne, 16.
- Franquet d'Arras*, beheaded with the concurrence of Joan of Arc, ii. 592, *note*.
- Frazer*, Simon, beheaded for his adherence to Robert Bruce, ii. 111.
- Frederick Barbarossa*, invades Poland, ii. 11; establishes a connexion between Germany and Italy, 20; his death in Cilicia, on a crusade, *ib.* (see also i. 370); his invasion of Italy, ii. 34; takes and destroys Milan, 36; his defeat at Lignano, 37.
- Frederick II.* his crusade, his connexions with Mussulmen, ii. 21.

- French* language, modern, derived from the Anglo-Norman, iv. 314.
Friars, Franciscan and Dominican, their contests with the English clergy, v. 155.
Friesland, its condition in the eleventh century, i. 46.; submits to Robert, son of Baldwin count of Flanders, 47, *note*.
Friuli, Berenger, duke of, contends for the sovereignty of Italy, i. 17. 22.

G.

- Gaimar*, *Estorie des Angles*, an early specimen of Anglo-Norman verse, iv. 223.
Garcia, Don, obtains the kingdom of Navarre and Biscay, i. 56.
Garenter, Thomas, preaches against the popish doctrines, iii. 128.
Gasto de Biern, a Gascon noble, brought to England with a halter about his neck, for his rebellion, ii. 57, *note*.
Gaul, invaded by the Burgundians and Franks, i. 5.
Gavaudun the elder, the troubadour, his lamentations on the loss of Jerusalem, i. 350, *note*.
Gaveston, Piers de, his early history, and banishment from England, ii. 130; recalled by Edward II. and promoted to great honors, 132; offends the nobles by his arrogance, 133; sent into honorable banishment as viceroy of Ireland, 135; married to the king's niece, 136; criminally arraigned, and banished, *ib.*; returns to England, 138; taken by the barons, 139; put to death by command of the earl of Lancaster, 140.
Gengiz Khan, conquers Russia, ii. 15.
Genoa, its early commercial celebrity, ii. 26.
Geoffry, son of Henry I. by the fair Rosamund, made archbishop of York by his brother Richard the First, i. 362, *note*.
 — son of Henry II. his character, i. 296; conspires against his father, *ib.*; killed in a tournament at Paris, 297.
George the Third, his conduct towards a maniac who had attempted his life, contrasted with that of Henry the Third in a similar case, i. 451, *note*.
Georges, or Joury I. sovereign of Russia, improves the country by building several cities, and Moskow among others, ii. 15.
Gerard of Cremona, publishes translations of Arabian works on the sciences, iv. 378.
Gerbert. See *Sylvester* II.
German vernacular poetry, its origin, ii. 25, and *note*.
 — empire, state of, from the eleventh to the fourteenth century, ii. 17.
Germans, ancient, Cæsar and Tacitus's accounts of, i. 4, *note*.
 — their character in the eleventh century, i. 49.
Germany, occupied by Slavonian and Tartar tribes, i. 5; its condition in the eleventh century, 47; state of the north of, from the eleventh to the fourteenth century, ii. 9; becomes inde-

- pendent of France, i. 16; the chiefs of, choose Conrad, duke of Franconia, emperor, 17.
- Ghebelines*. See *Guelphs*.
- Gibraltar*, designated *Jubalataricæ Mons*, i. 364, *note*.
- Gildas Modud*, his Irish poem, i. 284.
- Gildford*, sir John, attainted by Richard the Third, iii. 493, *note*.
- Gisla*, the wife of the Hungarian chief, converts her husband to Christianity, i. 43, *note*.
- daughter of the king of France, given in marriage to Rolla, i. 64.
- Glasdale*, William, a commander at the siege of Orleans, ii. 515, *note*; his death, 571.
- Gloucester*, duke of, alleged plot to assassinate him by Richard II. and others, ii. 299; his quarrel with the duke of Ireland, *ib.*; accused of treason, 305; betrayed by the king into an arrest, and murdered, 309.
- duke of, appointed protector to his nephew Henry the Sixth, ii. 485; limitations of his powers, 489; disastrous consequences of his quarrel with the duke of Burgundy, 493; marries Jacqueline of Hainault, 494; challenged to a duel by the duke of Burgundy, 495; incurs the displeasure of the English regency, 496; his marriage with Jacqueline being annulled, marries Eleanor Cobham, 497; his dissipation, 498; his contest with the bishop of Winchester for the government of Henry VI. 499; his reconciliation with him, 503; his political contests with cardinal Winchester renewed, iii. 1; deprived of the protectorate, 2; his charges against the cardinal, 32; his duchess accused of witchcraft, and sentenced to imprisonment for life, 46; arrested by the intrigues of the duke of Suffolk, 48; found dead in his bed, 49; his character, 55.
- Richard, duke of. See *Richard*.
- Duchess of, accused of witchcraft, iii. 42; sentenced to do penance, and to be imprisoned for life, 46.
- Goat*, carried by the crusaders as an object of veneration, i. 328, *note*.
- Godescalus*, a German monk, conducts a body of crusaders to Asia, i. 327.
- Godfrey* of Bouillon, duke of Lower Lorraine, leads a body of followers to the crusades, i. 330; exposed to great danger at Constantinople by the treachery of the emperor, but afterwards received by him with honor, 332; passes the Hellespont, 334; besieges and takes Nice, 335; defeats the Turks at the battle of Doryldun, 337; captures Antioch, 339; takes Jerusalem, 341; made king of the city, 343.
- Golden Bull* of Germany, its compilation, ii. 23.
- Goose*, carried by the crusaders as an object of veneration, i. 328, *note*.
- Gothic* nations, not unwilling to acquire literature, iv. 121; imbibed the rhetorical spirit of the Roman literature, 135.

- Goths*, the, invade Spain, i. 5.
- Gower*, John, the poet, patronized by Richard the Second, ii. 274. 279. 342; account of his life and poems, v. 291-316; his French sonnet, 315, *note*; analysis of his *Confessio Amantis*, 318.
- Gray*, Sir John, his humane and noble conduct towards some French prisoners, ii. 367.
- Greathead*, Bishop, his acquaintance with the Arabian writers on the Sciences, iv. 383; supporter of the scholastic philosophy, 477; opposes the authority of the pope, v. 148, and i. 440, *note*.
- Grecian* empire, its condition in the fifth century, i. 6.
— literature, its decline, iv. 141.
- Greece*, the emperor of, engages English auxiliaries to repel the invasion of the Normans in the eleventh century, i. 92; taken prisoner by the Turks under Alp Arslan, 307.
- Greek* merchants, trade to Novogrod in the ninth century, i. 38; visit the Baltic, through Russia, about the eleventh century, 39.
- Gregory* the Second, Pope, his apology for the ignorance of the legates, i. 6, *note*.
— VII. Pope, his war with Henry IV. emperor of Germany, i. 49; state of the papacy under, 54; fails to obtain the homage of William the Conqueror, 131; favors the crusades, 319.
- Grey*, Sir Thomas, conspires against Henry the Fifth, ii. 394.
— Lord, killed at the siege of Orleans, ii. 520.
— Lord Richard, accompanies Edward the Fifth from Ludlow on his way to London, and is arrested by Gloucester and Buckingham, iii. 383; beheaded, 427.
- Grey de Ruthvin*, Lord, his treacherous conduct towards Owen Glendower, ii. 354; engaged with the Yorkists at the battle of Northampton, iii. 211.
- Grey*, Lady Elizabeth, married to Edward the Fourth, and crowned at Westminster, iii. 243.
- Gryffyth ap Cynan*, king of Wales, invades England, i. 144, *note*; succeeds in a predatory excursion against a border lord, 158, *note*.
- Guelphs* and *Ghibelines*, their wars in Italy, i. 54.
- Guesclin*, du, his early history and character, ii. 224; conducts an army of the White Companies of France against Peter the Cruel, 226; defeated by Edward the Black Prince, and taken prisoner, 230; obtains his ransom, 232; expels the English from the south of France, 233.
- Guiscard*, Robert, obtains possession of Apulia, i. 56; attacks Greece, 54, *note*.
- Gutmund*, a foreign monk, refuses to accept ecclesiastical dignities from William I. on account of his cruel treatment of the English, i. 113, and *note*.
- Gunpowder*, use of by Richard III. iii. 490, *note*.
- Guy*, Duke of Spoleto, contends for sovereign sway in Italy, i. 17. 42.

Guy, king of Jerusalem, escapes to Cyprus after the capture of the city by Saladin, i. 369; contends with Conrad for the kingdom of Palestine, 387; receives Cyprus from Richard I. 390, *note*.

Guy de Montfort, excommunicated by the Pope, ii. 46.

H.

Haco, king of Norway, in attempting to introduce Christianity, made to eat the horseflesh of the sacrifices, i. 30, *note*.

Hainault, the count, joins the queen in her armament against Edward the Second, ii. 155.

Hales, Alexander, "the irrefragable doctor" of the scholastic philosophy, iv. 472.

Halidon Hill, the battle of, ii. 181.

Hall, Sir David, defends Caen against the French, iii. 162.

Halle, John, one of the murderers of the duke of Gloucester, ii. 311, *note*.

Hamburg made one of the Hanse towns, ii. 27.

Hamildon Hill, the battle of, ii. 353.

Hanse towns, their origin and constitution, ii. 25.

Hapsburg, the house of, assume the imperial dignity in Germany, ii. 23.

Harald Hardraada, sea-king of Norway, his character, exploits and death, i. 29; a persecutor of Christianity, 29, *note*; his contest with Svenno, 100.

Harfleur besieged and taken by Henry the Fifth, ii. 401.

Harold, king of Denmark, defeats and slays Harald Hardraada in Yorkshire, i. 29; endeavors to abolish the duel, 31; his violation of his oath of fealty furnishes William Duke of Normandy with a pretext for the invasion of England, 75; procures himself to be surreptitiously named king, 76, *note*; sends a fleet to intercept William's retreat, 79, *note*; his precipitancy condemned, 81; his sons fly to Ireland after his defeat and death, 82, *note*; interesting circumstances attending the discovery of his body on the field of battle, 84, *note*; buried at Waltham Abbey, *ib.*; his two sons and daughter take refuge in the Danish court, 100; his daughter married to a Russian sovereign, *ib.* *note*.

Harold Harfagre, banishes Rollo from Norway, i. 61; origin of his title of "Fair Hair," *ib.* *note*; his wise government of Norway, 68.

Hassassins, or *Assassins*, a Persian sect, account of, i. 386, *note*.

Hastings, the northman, invades France, i. 62.

— lord, committed to the Tower on a quarrel with lord Rivers, iii. 328; his history and character, 352; takes part with Gloucester and Buckingham against lord Rivers, &c. 385; beheaded in the Tower, 416.

Hedgecote-field, battle of, iii. 256.

Hegley Moor, battle of, iii. 239.

Hegira, the Mohamedan æra, date of its commencement, i. 302, *note*.

Helias de Flechia, his singular rencontre with William Rufus, i. 147.

Helie, a Norman baron, secures the son of duke Robert from the attempt of Henry I. to seize him, i. 181.

Henry I. chief of Austria, assumes the title of duke of Austria, i. 45, *note*.

— Duke of Saxony, chosen emperor, i. 17.

— the Lion, duke of Saxony, marries the daughter of Henry the Second of England, ii. 10, *note*.

— IV. emperor of Germany, early accession, i. 48; character and reign, *ib.*; conclusion of his reign, and death, ii. 17.

— V. emperor of Germany, his contests with the pope, ii. 18; marries the daughter of Henry I. of England, 19.

— VI. emperor of Germany, detains Richard I. in captivity, ii. 20; his death, *ib.*

— I. surnamed Beauclerc, king of England, his filial attachment rewarded by his father, i. 121; receives from him, while on his death bed, a legacy of 5000 pounds of silver, 125; purchases a part of Normandy from his brother Robert, 143, *note*; besieged in his castle by his brothers, 148; seizes the royal treasure at Winchester, on receiving intelligence of his brother's death, 169; crowned in London, 170; his wise and popular measures on ascending the throne, *ib.*; his literary education, *ib.*; marries Mathilda, daughter of Malcolm king of Scotland, by the sister of Edgar Etheling, 171; makes peace with his brother Robert, who had invaded his kingdom, 173; attacks with success the system of rapine which prevailed on his accession, 174; his assistance solicited by the Normans, to remedy the evils of Robert's government, 176; invades Normandy, 178; defeats, and takes him prisoner at the battle of Tenchebray, *ib.*; commits him a prisoner for life to Cardiff castle, 180; his treatment of him during his captivity, *ib.*; not certain that he ordered him to be deprived of his sight, *ib.*; attempts to seize Robert's son in Normandy, but without success, 181; tranquilizes Normandy, 182; is visited in England by Louis, dauphin of France, *ib.*; makes war with him, after he had become king of France, 184; attempts made on behalf of William, his brother Robert's son, to deprive him of the duchy of Normandy, *ib.*; marries his son to the daughter of the earl of Anjou, 185; defeats Louis at the battle of Audelay, *ib.*; visited by the Pope at Gisors, and is by his mediation reconciled to the French king, 187; death of his son at sea, on his passage from Normandy, *ib.*; his second marriage with Adeliza, daughter of the count of Louvain, 191; appoints his daughter Matilda his successor, *ib.*; dies in Normandy, in consequence of eating lampreys, 192; his character, *ib.*; derivation of his title of "Lion of

Justice," 194; patronizes the Anglo-Norman vernacular poetry, iv. 201.

Henry II. marries Eleanor, the divorced queen of Louis king of France, i. 210; invades England, but enters into a compromise with Stephen, *ib.*; succeeds to the English crown, *ib.*; his extensive possessions at his accession, 213; withholds the province of Anjou from his brother Geoffry, in violation of his oath, 214; reviled for his pacific disposition, 215. 22b; his love of literature, *ib.*; tenacity of his memory, *ib. note*; his peculiar temper, 218; makes Thomas à Becket chancellor of England, 221; causes himself to be three times crowned, 224, *note*; his familiarity with Becket, *ib.*; proposes a marriage treaty between his eldest son and the daughter of Louis king of France, 227; goes to Paris on the consummation of the treaty, 229; engages in hostilities against Louis, but makes peace with him on the marriage of their children, 230; defeated by the Welsh, but afterwards cuts down the woods, and builds castles to coerce them, 231; nominates Becket to the see of Canterbury, 232; begins to break with him on his resigning the chancellorship, 238; takes measures to subject the clergy to the criminal tribunals, 240; his contest with Becket, 242; seizes his possessions on his quitting the country, 254, *note*; a reconciliation effected between him and the archbishop in Normandy, 260; denies his knowledge of Becket's murder, and does penance at his tomb, 271; acquires the sovereignty of Ireland, 274. 290; his infidelity to his queen, and his imprisonment of her in consequence of her resentment, 295; makes a labyrinthine residence for Rosamund, *ib. note*; his sons conspire to dethrone him, *ib.*; contracts a marriage for his son John, 297, *note*; his dishonourable conduct respecting Alice, sister of Philip king of France, who had been betrothed to his son Richard, 298; undertakes the crusade, *ib.*; his death, 299; surnamed *Curt-mantell*, and why, *ib. note*.

— eldest son of Henry II. crowned in his father's lifetime, king Henry the Third, i. 263; his character, 295; conspires against his father, 296; his death, 297.

— III. (son of king John) named his father's successor, i. 426; crowned at Westminster, 430; confirms Magna Charta, 432; general incidents of his reign, *ib.*; his virtues, 434; abused by the troubadours, 435; the wealth of England under his reign, 437; his numerous foreign connexions, *ib.*; assumes the cross, 439, *note*; engages in the crusade against the Albigenses, 441; his contest with the barons, and capture at the battle of Lewes, 449; recovers his freedom after the battle of Evesham, 450; his death, 451; his conduct towards a maniac who had attempted his life, contrasted with that of George III. in similar circumstances, *ib. note*.

— of Lancaster, takes part with the barons against Richard II. and his ministers, ii. 302; discloses the duke of Norfolk's con-

versation respecting the king's designs against certain barons, 313; prepares for a trial at battle with the duke, 315; is banished the kingdom, 316; lamentations at his departure, 317, *note*; invited to assume the government of England, and lands in Yorkshire, 322; obtains possession of the king's person, 335; chosen king, and crowned under the title of

Henry the Fourth, ii. 338; his claims to the throne considered, 348; plots against him, headed by the earls of Salisbury and Huntingdon, 349; charged with being the author of the death of his predecessor, 351; his wars with Scotland, 353; and with the Welsh under Owen Glendower, 354; projects an expedition into Palestine, 356; his differences with the Percys, *ib.*; defeats their forces at the battle of Shrewsbury, 359; his transactions with France, 361; challenged to single combat by the duke of Orleans, but refuses, *ib.*; supports the papal hierarchy against the followers of Wicliffe, 364; his conduct towards France, 366; the Commons address him against the clergy, and in favour of the Lollards, 368; his alarms and character, 370; his death, 376; his marriage with Joan, duchess dowager of Bretagne, *ib. note*.

— Prince, of Monmouth, appointed lieutenant of Wales, ii. 356. 378; his gallant conduct at the battle of Shrewsbury, 360. 379; sends troops, without the king's knowledge, to support the duke of Burgundy, 363; his unfilial conduct towards his father, when near his death, 372. See *Henry V.*

— V. his early history and character, ii. 377; his attachment to literature, 384; his conduct towards the chief justice, 387; his differences with his father, 388; projects a war with France, 390; conspiracy against him, 394; besieges and takes Harfleur, 401; determines upon returning by way of Calais, and his arduous march for that place, 412; his signal victory at Agincourt, 431, *et seq.*; returns to England, and is received with great public rejoicings, 461; enters into a treaty with the duke of Burgundy, by which he is acknowledged king of France, 464; invades France, 465; marries Catherine, daughter of the French king, and is declared his successor to the French crown, 466; dies in France, 468; his character, *ib. note*; his persecution of the Lollards, 469; his person described, 474, *note*; projects an expedition to Palestine, 476; reflections on his character, 477; buried at Westminster, 482.

— VI. accedes to the English throne in his infancy, under the new title of "King of France and England," ii. 484; English possessions in France at this period, 488; contests respecting the government of him, between the duke of Gloucester and the bishop of Winchester, 497; placed under the tutelage of the earl of Warwick, 506; crowned at Westminster, iii. 3; crowned king of France at Paris, 9; married to Margaret of Anjou, 38; his partiality towards lord Suffolk, and elevation of him to the dukedom, 41; obliged to banish him, 69; his army driven

from Normandy, 78 ; his dangers from the conduct of the queen, and the administration under her influence, 86 ; becomes seriously indisposed, 175 ; his character by Blackman, *ib. note* ; recovers from his malady, 182 ; heads an army against the duke of York, and is defeated at St. Albans, 187 ; his second illness, 190 ; effects a temporary reconciliation between the hostile nobles, 193 ; his forces under lord Audley defeated at Bloreheath, 200 ; disperses the forces of York at Ludlow, 202 ; defeated at the battle of Northampton, 210 ; conducted to London, 212 ; heads an army against the queen's forces to St. Albans, where he again unites with her, 220 ; Edward duke of York, made king during his absence from London, 222 ; retreats to Scotland, after the defeat of his forces by Edward, 232 ; defeated at the battle of Hexham, 239 ; taken prisoner, brought to London, and sent to the Tower, 240 ; liberated and restored to the throne by the earl of Warwick, 272 ; dethroned, and sent to the Tower, on Edward's arrival in London, 292 ; dies in the Tower, 319 ; the tradition, of his being killed by Gloucester, refuted, *ib.* ; buried at Windsor by order of Richard the Third, iv. 30.

Henry, Earl of Richmond, project of raising him to the throne, iii. 472 ; attempts to invade England from Bretagne, 480 ; returns on hearing of Buckingham's failure and death, 482 ; narrowly escapes being taken in Bretagne by the emissaries of Richard the Third, 484 ; attainted, 492 ; lands in Milford Haven, 511 ; his danger from being left alone near Atherstone, 518 ; his decisive victory at the battle of Bosworth Field, 523 ; saluted king of England on the field, by the title of Henry the Seventh, 529.

— VII. born at Pembroke, iv. 48 ; orders the young earl of Warwick to be conveyed to the Tower, 50 ; arrives in London, and is crowned, 51 ; his right to the throne confirmed by Parliament, 53 ; establishes a body guard of archers, 54 ; marries Elizabeth, daughter of Edward the Fourth, *ib.* ; narrowly escapes being taken by insurrectionary forces under lord Lovel, 56 ; birth of his son Arthur, 59 ; attempts of Simnel, &c. to wrest the throne from him, 62 ; defeats the insurgents in the battle of Stoke, 65 ; causes his queen to be crowned, 67 ; Perkin Warbeck's insurrection against him, *ib.* ; defeats the insurgents at Blackheath, 73 ; causes Warbeck and the young earl of Warwick to be put to death, 75 ; death of his son Arthur, 76 ; his conduct respecting the reformation of the church and clergy, *ib.* ; sanctions the persecution of the Lollards, 81 ; his foreign politics, *ib.* ; his foreign alliances, 87 ; death of his queen, 89 ; his character, 90 ; his death, 101 ; substance of his laws, 105.

— second son of Henry the Seventh, made prince of Wales, and marries Catherine, his brother's widow, iv. 89.

- of Burgundy, founds the kingdom of Portugal, i. 59.

Henry Tristemarre, natural brother of Peter the Cruel, aspires to the throne of Castile, ii. 226; defeated by the Black Prince, 230.

— the minstrel (Blind Harry,) account of his poems, v. 379.

Herbert, created earl of Pembroke for his successes against Jasper, the former earl, iii. 253; beheaded, 256.

Heretics, the first statute for burning, passed in the reign of Henry the Fourth, ii. 364.

Hereward le Wake, his remarkable exploits against William I. i. 107; his exploits celebrated in the popular songs of the Anglo-Saxons and Normans, 110; makes his peace with William I. and obtains his patrimonial inheritance, 111.

Hermannus Dalmatus, studies astronomy under the Arabians in Spain, iv. 378.

Herrings, the battle of, ii. 518.

Hexham, battle of, iii. 239.

Hierarchy, papal, of England, state of, in the early part of the fifteenth century, iii. 96; its contests with the crown, 102.

Holland, its political condition in the eleventh century, i. 46; its ancient poetry, ii. 29.

— the count of, made emperor of Germany, ii. 23, *note*.

— John, lord, brother of Richard II. supposed to have murdered a friar committed to his custody, ii. 280.

Horn, Geste of kyng, the romance of, v. 240.

Hosbarne, sets fire to the hill of Kildrumy, ii. 110.

Hotspur, assists in the defeat of the Scots at Hamildon Hill, ii. 353; conspires against Henry the Fourth, 358; defeated and slain at the battle of Shrewsbury, 360.

Howard, John Lord, his history and character, iii. 355; made seneschal of Lancashire by the duke of Gloucester, 402.

Hrolfr. See *Rollo*.

Hubert, archbishop of Canterbury, unites with king John against the claims of Arthur, i. 405.

Hugh Capet, his elevation to the throne of France, i. 21.

— brother of the king of France, imprisoned by the Greek emperor when on his march to the crusades, i. 331; liberated through the interference of Godfrey of Bouillon, 332.

Hugh de Cressingham, made treasurer of Scotland, ii. 81; killed at Stirling, and skinned by the Scotch, 88, *note*.

Human Sacrifices, offered at Upsal, i. 32, *note*; offered by the Slavi, 36, *note*; offered in Courland to serpents and birds, 41.

Humphrey, dining with duke, origin of the phrase, iii. 55, *note*.

Hungarians, their devastation of Europe, i. 18; their descent and history, *ib.*; character and habits, 19; their invasions checked by the emperor Henry, 20; finally repressed by his son Otho the Great, *ib.*; their habitations, 44, *note*.

Hungary (Pannonia) depopulated in the wars between the Avari and Charlemagne, i. 18, *note*; receives Christianity from the

- pope, 24; its inhabitants converted to Christianity, 43; the king of, receives a splendid crown from the pope on the occasion, 44.
- Hungerford*, lord, defeated at Hegeley Moor, and beheaded after the battle of Hexham, iii. 239.
- Sir Walter, joins the earl of Richmond against Richard the Third, iii. 517.
- Hunnia*, a name of Austria, i. 44, *note*.
- Huntingdon*, earl of, plots against Henry the Fourth, and is beheaded, ii. 349.
- Huss*, John, embraces and promulgates the opinions of Wicliffe, v. 200.

I.

- Ida*, daughter of the duke of Lower Lorrain, mother of Godfrey of Bouillon, i. *note*, 330.
- Idolatry*, of Europe, i. 23.
- Ierne*, an ancient name of Ireland, i. 274.
- Iernis*, an ancient name of Ireland, i. 274.
- Ilmen*, the river, the seat of the early civilization of Russia, i. 37.
- Images*, use of, v. 54.
- Infidelity*, progress of, in the twelfth century, v. 140.
- Ingulf*, his visit to Jerusalem, 317.
- Innocent III.* Pope, his contests with king John, i. 410; raises a crusade against the Albigenses, 441.
- Inquisition*, the court of, established during the crusades against the Albigenses, i. 444, *note*; founded by St. Dominic, v. 103.
- Insurrection*, in Kent under John Cade, iii. 79; of Robin of Redesdale, against Edward the Fourth, 254.
- Insurrections*, popular, occasioned by the poll-tax levied by Richard the Second, ii. 254; their probable causes, 264; on account of the religious persecution of the Lollards, iii. 14.
- Interdict* of the Pope, its use in the Catholic church, v. 67.
- Ireland*, early known to the Greeks, i. 274; its historical fables, 275; its connexions with Spain, 276; its language and letters, 277; its ancient state, 279; divided into petty kingdoms, which were engaged in perpetual hostilities, 280; becomes distinguished for its scholars, 281; invaded by the northmen, *ib.*; its state in the twelfth century, 282; its ancient poems, 284; invaded by some English adventurers, at the solicitation of Dermot, king of Leinster, 290; submits to Henry II. 294; its early attention to literature, iv. 123.
- duke of, the favorite of Richard the Second, ii. 273; made marquis of Dublin, 274, *note*; his quarrel with the duke of Gloucester, 299; raises an army in Wales to support the king against the barons, 302; dies abroad in poverty, 303.
- Irin*, an ancient name of Ireland, i. 275.

- Irish*, state and manners of, in the fourteenth century, ii. 318, *note*.
 — troops, under Henry V. in France, their condition and arms, ii. 465, *note*.
Irmisul, the idol of the Saxons, i. 10.
Iron Crown of Italy, description of, i. 6, *note*.
Isabelle, daughter of Charles VI. of France, married to Richard the Second, ii. 346.
Islamism. See *Mohamedanism*.
Ismalians, a name of the Assassins of Syria, ii. 55, *note*.
Italy, invaded by the Lombards, &c. i. 5; its condition under them, 6; divided by the Lombards into petty sovereignties, *ib.*; benefits resulting from this measure, *ib.*; states founded in by Charlemagne, 14; becomes independent of France, 16; harassed by supporting the rival pretensions of two lords for imperial sway, 17; native sovereigns of, 22; annexed to the empire of Germany, 23; its condition in the eleventh century, 53; state of, from the eleventh to the fourteenth century, ii. 33.
Ivo Tailboys (the wood cutter) taken prisoner by Hereward, i. 108.
Izarn, a troubadour, his invectives against the Albigenes, i. 444, *note*.

J.

- Jackanapes*, probable etymology of the word, iii. 73, *note*.
Jacqueline, of Hainault, marries the duke of Gloucester, ii. 493.
James I. of Scotland, benefits enjoyed by him from his captivity in England, ii. 371, *note*; murdered, iii. 225, *note*; his poetry noticed, v. 379.
 — II. of Scotland; his conduct towards England, iii. 225; *note*; killed at the siege of Roxburgh, *ib.*
 — III. king of Scotland, makes a treaty of friendship with Richard the Third, iii. 499.
 — IV. of Scotland, marries Margaret, eldest daughter of Henry the Seventh, iv. 88.
Jargeau, taken by Joan of Arc, ii. 579.
Jaroslav, establishes an academy at Kiow in the eleventh century, i. 40.
Jasper, earl Pembroke, takes arms against Edward the Fourth, iii. 233, *note*; escapes to the continent, 241; lands in North Wales, and is defeated, 253; takes Henry, earl of Richmond, abroad for security, iv. 49; created duke of Bedford, 53.
Jeffry of Monmouth, his British history, (an early specimen of our narrative poetry) account of, iv. 218; translated by Wace into Anglo Norman verse, 222; its origin traced to the political views of Henry the First, 269.
Jerome of Prague, adopts and promulgates the opinions of Wicliffe, v. 201.
Jerusalem, falls under the dominion of the Turks, i. 308; visited by European pilgrims, 316; by sir Sidney Smith, 317; taken by the crusaders, 341; retaken by the Turks, under Saladin, 349.

Jesuits' conduct in India, v. 40.

Jews, massacred by the crusaders in Germany, i. 328; dreadful massacre of, in London and other parts of England, on the coronation of Richard the First, 359; large sums extorted from them by king John, 413, *note*; expelled from England by Edward the First, ii. 118; sketch of their dispersions, vicissitudes and calamities, from the destruction of Jerusalem to the conclusion of his reign, 126, *note*; their literary men, 385-9.

Joan of Arc, her early history and character, ii. 525; introduced to the French king, 550; obtains his assent to her enterprize, against the English, 554; marches to the relief of Orleans, 558; enters the town, 560; wounded in attacking a fort, 568; compels the English to raise the siege, 572; takes Jargeau, 579; defeats and captures the earl Talbot at the battle of Patay, 581; conducts the king to Rheims to be crowned, 585; receives letters of nobility, 587; wins the battle of Lagny, 589; taken prisoner at Compeigne, 590; her conduct respecting Franquet d'Arras, 592, *note*; tried and burnt at Rouen, 594; a recent disease like her hallucination, 600.

Joannes Erigena, one of the first writers on scholastic philosophy, iv. 446; synopsis of his *De Divisione Naturæ*, 447.

Joffred, abbot of Croyland, promotes the revival of Latin literature in England, iv. 154.

John, King, his father Henry II. contracts a marriage between him and the daughter of the count of Maurienne, i. 297, *note*; leagues against his father, 299; attempts to seize the English crown during the captivity of Richard, 398; his subsequent contests with him, 399; his early dissipation, 404; on the death of his brother; seizes the throne, to the prejudice of his nephew Arthur, 405; makes the young prince captive, 406; suspected to have been the cause of his death, *ib.*; loses Normandy, *ib.*; treated with scorn by the troubadours, 407, *note*; acquires the designation of *Lack-land*, 407; his successes against the Scotch, Irish, and Welsh, 408; his contest with the pope, 409; resigns his crown to Pandulf, the pope's legate, 413; invades Poitou, and is defeated by Philip, 415; forced by the barons to grant *Magna Charta*, *ib.*; his subsequent wild and insane conduct, 423; attacks the barons with foreign auxiliaries, 425; his death, 426; his character, *ib.*; offers to turn Mussulman, 428; persecutes heretics, 429; acts as a knight-errant, 461.

— king of France, accedes to the crown on the death of his father, Philip de Valois, ii. 214; taken prisoner by the Black Prince at the battle of Poitiers; 218; arrives in London, 221; ransomed, 222.

— XXI. pope, killed by the fall of some apartments at Viterbo, ii. 51, *note*.

— the chaplain, account of his poetical translation of Boetius, v. 365.

- Jomsberg*, the republic and emporium of the Slavi, i. 36; destroyed by Waldemar, *ib.* and ii. 5; its commercial celebrity, ii. 26.
- Jongleurs*, Anglo-Norman, their origin and character, iv. 183, *et seq.*
- Jorsala*, the Norwegian name of Jerusalem, ii. 4, *note.*
- Jourdemayn*, Margery, burnt for witchcraft, iii. 45.
- Joury I.* See *George.*
- Jubalatarix Mons*, a name of Gibraltar, i. 364, *note.*
- Judith*, niece of William I. and wife of Waltheof, betrays the conspiracy of her husband and the Norman barons, i. 116.

K.

- Kemp*, cardinal, archbishop of Canterbury, his death, iii. 178.
- Kent*, the earl of, executed on a fabricated charge of treason, ii. 179.
- Kerman*, the Turkish kingdom of, established, i. 308.
- Kerrell*, sir Thomas, defeated and captured in Normandy, iii. 78.
- Kettell*, the nephew of Harold, retires to Norway after Harold's death, i. 82, *note.*
- Kildrummy*, the castle of, taken by the English, ii. 110.
- Kiow*, founded by the Slavi, i. 37; taken by the Scandinavian sea-kings, 38; called the rival of Constantinople, *ib.*; considered one of the early capitals of Russia, ii. 12; its decline, 15; its early commercial celebrity, 26.
- Knight*, origin of the title, i. 471, *note.*
- Knights*, who were qualified to be made, i. 463; mode of making, 465; state of, in England, at the accession of Edward the Fifth, iii. 362; Gower's description of them, i. 474; their mode of fighting, 477.
- ladies engage in war in the habit of, i. 468.
- *Errant*, their character and employment, i. 454–464.
- Kyng Alexander*, the romance of, v. 241.
- of Tars, the romance of, v. 241.
- Kyrrel*, sir Thomas, beheaded by queen Margaret, iii. 225.

L.

- Ladies*, engage in war in the habit of knights, i. 468; become objects of devotion to them, *ib.*
- La Hire*, a French commander under Joan of Arc, at the siege of Orleans, ii. 559.
- Lancaster*, the earl of, raises the barons against Edward the Second, on account of his protection of Gaveston, ii. 138; causes Gaveston to be murdered, 140; becomes unpopular, 149; taken

captive and put to death, 151; marries the Spanish princess Constance, true heiress of Castile, 239.

Lancaster, John of Gaunt, duke of, succeeds his brother, the Black Prince, in the command of Guienne, ii. 232; attends the first parliament of Richard the First with his title of King of Castile and Leon, 246; his unpopularity, and retirement from court, 247; commands the English fleet against the French, 248; determines to struggle for the Castilian Crown, 250; his palace at the Savoy burnt by the insurgents under Wat Tyler, 258; his attachment to Wicliffe, 263; accused of conspiring to seize the crown, 280; his arrest ordered by the king, who is afterwards reconciled to him, *ib.*; singular charge against him of forging a chronicle, 281, *note*; leads an army into Spain, to contend for the crown of Castile, 282; commutes his pretensions for money, 294, *note*; conducts an expedition into Scotland, and destroys the woods, 295.

Lanfranc, informs William of the defeat of the conspiracy of the Norman barons, i. 115; solicited by William the conqueror, on his death bed, to obtain the coronation of William II. as king of England, 125; succeeds in his undertaking, 141; his prudent administration under William, 149; his death, and its political consequences, 150; revives Latin literature in England after the Norman conquest, iv. 149; restores and regulates the Anglo-Norman monasteries, v. 87.

Landois, Peter, treasurer of the duke of Bretagne, attempts to deliver the earl of Richmond into the power of Richard the Third, iii. 484.

Langton, Stephen, made archbishop of Canterbury, i. 411; assists the barons in obtaining Magna Charta, 416.

— Simon, a supporter of the scholastic philosophy, iv. 477.

Language of France, its ancient divisions, i. 51.

Langue d'oc, the designation of the ancient language of the South of France, i. 213.

Latin literature, its revival in England, iv. 149.

Laws of Henry VII. the substance of them, iv. 105.

Layamon, account of his poetry, v. 214.

Leg, the taxing commissioner, beheaded by the insurgents in the time of Richard the Second, ii. 258.

Legends of the Saints, their use in the Catholic church, v. 52.

Leicester, Earl of, invested with the government on the capture of Henry III. and his death at the battle of Eversham, i. 449.

Lennox, Earl of, assists Robert Bruce in his exile, ii. 107.

Leon, the christian kingdom of, in Spain, its origin, i. 56.

Leonine rimes, quality of, and the probable origin of the name, iv. 209.

Leopold, first marquis of Austria, i. *note*, 45.

— Duke of Austria, visits Jerusalem, i. 46, *note*; holds Richard Cœur de Lion prisoner, *ib.*

- Lewis*, of Carleon (Kaerlion,) committed to the Tower by Richard the Third for his astronomical predictions, iii. 492.
- Leukner*, Sir Thomas, attainted by Richard the Third, iii. 493, *note*.
- Leyczon*, La nobla, a poem on the opinions of the Vaudois, analysis of, v. 131.
- Lincoln*, Earl of, favours the plot of Lambert Simnel against Henry the Seventh, iv. 62; killed at the battle of Stoke, 66.
- Lingones*, a branch of the Slavi tribe, i. 34, *note*.
- Literary history of England*, iv. 113.
- Literature*, review of the causes of the decline of, before the Norman conquest, iv. 113; decline of, in the Roman empire, 114; ascribed by the Romans to their moral degeneracy, 117; its apparent destruction in Europe by the invasion of the Gothic nations, and its subsequent reformation, 342.
- Llewelyn ap Gryffyth*, the last king of Wales, his contest with Edward I. and death, ii. 60; his head sent to London and fixed on the Tower, 64.
- Lodi*, the republic of, its contests with Milan, ii. 33.
- Logical definitions*, ill effects of, iv. 483.
- Lollard*, probable etymology of the term, iii. 144, *note*.
- Lollards*, their persecution by Henry the Fourth, ii. 364; also by Henry the Fifth, 468; accused of plotting to destroy the king and his brothers, 471; persecuted and burnt, iii. 141.
- Lombards*, the, invade Italy, i. 5; assist Charles Martel in the expulsion of the Arabs from France, 10; their kingdom in Italy destroyed by Charlemagne, 14; their republics obtain an authorized existence by the peace of Constance in 1183, ii. 37; extirpate the Roman manners, letters and language, iv. 342.
- Lombardy*, the league of, its origin, ii. 36, *note*.
- Lose-coat Field*, the battle of, iii. 259.
- Lotharius II.* emperor of Germany, his reign, ii. 19.
- Louis VII.* king of France, while dauphin, visits Henry I. on account of a conspiracy formed against his life by his stepmother, i. 182; saved from the effects of poison administered by her orders, *ib.*; succeeds his father Philip, and employs himself to improve the state of his kingdom, *ib.*; challenges Henry to a single combat, 184; defeated by Henry at Audelay, 185; divorced his queen Eleanor, 210; concludes a treaty of marriage between his daughter and the eldest son of Henry the Second of England, 227; visits Mont St. Michael in Normandy, on a pilgrimage, 229; engages in hostilities against Henry, but is reconciled by the marriage of their children, 230; his conduct towards Becket, who had sought his friendship, 255; leads a body of crusaders into Asia, and is defeated with great slaughter by the Turks, 345; reaches Jerusalem, *ib.* *note*.
- *VIII.* while dauphin, invited to England, with an offer of the crown, by the barons, to assist them against king John, i. 425; returns to France on the coronation of Henry III. 431;

disappointed of the English crown by the accession of Henry, ii. 31; assists in the crusade against the Albigenses, *ib.*

Louis IX. St. joins the crusade against the Albigenses, i. 443; Joinville's account of his devotion to the papal church, 444, *note*; sails on a crusade to Tunis, and dies of the plague, 451; account of his crusades, and death, ii. 31.

— **XI.** his birth, ii. 491, *note*; reduces the French feudatory sovereignties into one great monarchy, i. 52; prevents a war projected against him by Edward the Fourth, iii. 252; assists in effecting a reconciliation between queen Margaret and the earl of Warwick, 261; makes peace with Edward the Fourth, 332; his great fear of death, 440; his death, *ib. note*.

Lovel, Francis lord, raised to the peerage by Edward the Fourth, iii. 353; promoted by the duke of Gloucester, 402; raises an insurrection against Henry the Seventh, iv. 56; escapes to Flanders, 57; killed at the battle of Stoke, 65.

Lübec, its early commercial prosperity, ii. 10, 26.

Lucca, its early commercial celebrity, ii. 26, 39, *note*.

Ludlow, failure of York at, iii. 202.

Lully, Raymond, "the most enlightened doctor" of the scholastic philosophy, iv. 472.

Luther, Martin, his approbation of the writings of Wicliffe, v. 202; his literary talents, *ib. note*.

Lydgate, account of his poems, v. 372.

M.

Macduff appeals to Edward I. against a judgment of king Baliol, ii. 75.

Madonna, her importance in the Catholic worship, v. 45.

Magdeburg, a capital of the Slavi, i. 36; made a Christian bishopric by Otho, 37.

Magiar, the oriental name of the Hungarians, i. 18, *note*.

Magna Charta, obtained from king John, i. 415; best copies of it, 417, 419-420, *note*; analysis of it, 421; annulled by the pope, 425; confirmed by Henry the Third, 432.

Magnopolis, the metropolis of the Obodriti, i. 34, *note*.

Magnus the Barefoot, king of Norway, his invasion of Ireland, and death, i. 29, 176, and *note*.

Mahmud, the first who bore the title of sultan, and king of the Turkish kingdom of Gazna, i. 306.

Maires du Palais, their importance under the Frankish kings, i. 9; the antiquity of the office, *ib. note*.

Malcolm, king of Scotland, invades England, and carries away a large number of captives, i. 104, *note*; makes his submission to William the Conqueror, 111; treacherously slain by Mowbray, earl of Northumbria, 159; his daughter married to Henry the First, 171.

Malek Shah, succeeds to the sovereignty of the Turks, i. 307; his power and character, 309, *note*.

- Mandeville*, Sir John, specimens of his English style, v. 445.
- Manny*, Sir Walter, accompanies Philippa, queen of Edward III. to England, ii. 178; his reception in Guienne, 196; his gallant conduct in an attack on the French camp at Auberoche, 199; account of his death, 200; his generous intercession for the citizens of Calais, 212.
- Mante*, the town of, burnt by William the Conqueror, i. 123.
- Manuscripts*, the multiplication of, on the revival of letters, by the labours of the monks, iv. 160.
- Manuel VII.* emperor of Greece, solicits the assistance of pope Gregory VII. against the Turks, i. 310.
- Manuel Paleologus*, emperor of Constantinople, visits London, to solicit aid from Henry IV. against the Turks, ii. 356.
- Marcomanini*, the, expel the Boii from Bohemia, i. 46, *note*.
- Mareschall*, William, earl of Pembroke, appointed regent during the minority of Henry the Third, i. 432; his death, *ib*.
- Margaret*, queen of Norway, unites Norway, Sweden and Denmark under one sovereignty, ii. 8.
- grand-daughter of Alexander III. and heiress of Scotland, dies in the Orkneys on her way from Norway, ii. 69.
- sister of Philip Augustus king of France, marries Edward the First, ii. 117.
- sister of Edward IV. married to the duke of Burgundy, iii. 247; favours the opponents of Henry the Seventh, iv. 57; supports the plot of Simnel, 63; countenances the pretensions of Perkin Warbeck, 68.
- daughter of the duke of Anjou, married to Henry the Sixth, iii. 38; crowned at Westminster, *ib*.; acquires a preponderating influence in the administration, 46; consequences of her power, 86; visits the country gentry to increase her popularity, 173; her influence suspended by the illness of the king, 177; regains her influence and removes York from the protectorate, 192; attempts his destruction, 193; her forces defeated by the earl of Salisbury at Bloreheath, 200; regains her influence by the dispersion of the Yorkists at Ludlow, 202; narrowly escapes from the battle of Northampton, and flies to Scotland, 211; assembles her friends in the north, 216; defeats and beheads the duke of York at the battle of Wakefield, 218; marches towards London, and defeats the Yorkists at St. Albans, and obtains possession of the king, 220; retires to the north, 224; retreats to Scotland after the battle of Towton, 232; invades England, 235; again takes refuge in France, 237; lands, and leads an army to the north, 239; her forces defeated at Hegeley Moor, *ib*.; and again at the battle of Hexham, 239; threatens to invade England from Harfleur, 252; is joined by Warwick, in France, 261; lands in England after the restoration of Edward the Fourth, 301; her forces defeated, and herself taken after the battle of Tewkesbury, 314; committed to the Tower, *ib*.

- Marie*, lays and fables of, (in Anglo-Norman) account of, iv. 287; new supposition who she was, 304.
- Marquises*, their office under Charlemagne, i. 13; acquire territorial possessions, *ib.*
- Martel*, Charles, defeats the Mohamedans in France with great slaughter, i. 9.
- Mathilda*, the niece of Edgar Etheling, marries Henry the First, i. 171; her education, *ib. note*; a patron of the Anglo-Norman vernacular poetry, iv. 201.
- Matilda*, queen of William I. left in charge of Normandy, i. 94; brought to England, 95; her maternal fondness for her eldest son Robert, 119; her death, 121.
- empress of Germany, returns to England on the death of the emperor, and is appointed the successor of her father, Henry the First, i. 191; married to the earl of Anjou, *ib.*; the English swear allegiance to her as the heiress to the throne, 197, *note*; excluded from the crown by the accession of Stephen, 198; lands in England to assert her claim to the throne, 205; obtains a safe conduct to her brother the count of Gloucester, at Bristol, *ib.*; crowned at Winchester, 207; becomes unpopular, and on the death of her brother, quits the kingdom, 209; her remark on the cause of the profligacy of the English clergy, 242, *note*; approves the conduct of Henry in his dispute with Becket, 258.
- Maximilian I.* acquires some of the Belgic provinces by his marriage with a Burgundian heiress, i. 47, *note*.
- Mecklenburg*, the see of, re-established, after being destroyed by the Slavi, ii. 10.
- Meingyn, R.* a priest, attacks the popish doctrines, iii. 128.
- Mendicant* friars, effect of their proceedings in England against the established clergy, iii. 114.
- Meriadoc*, the Welsh prince, repressed by the Normans, i. 112, *note*.
- Metals*, licences for the transmutation of, iii. 42.
- Milan*, the city of, its early celebrity, ii. 33; its encroachments on the neighbouring republics, *ib.*; its courageous defence against Frederic Barbarossa, by whom it was taken and rased to the ground, 36; rebuilt by the league of Lombardy, *ib.*
- Millennium*, popular belief respecting it in the eleventh century, i. 316.
- Minstrels*, Anglo-Norman, their origin and character, iv. 163.
- Miracles*, Catholic, in the middle ages, v. 108.
- Missionaries*, English, labour to convert the north of Europe to Christianity, i. 30, 31.
- Mohamed Abenamor*, his efforts to subdue the Christians in Spain, i. 57; dies at Medina Celi, *ib. note*.
- Mohamedanism*, introduced into Spain, i. 7; threatens the destruction of Christianity in Europe, *ib.*; its military spirit and progress, 302; its internal dissensions, 303; adopted by the Turks, 306; influence of, on Christianity, v. 116.
- Mohamedans* invade France, i. 9; defeated, after an engagement of seven days, by Charles Martel, and driven into Spain, *ib.*

- Moleyns*, Adam, made keeper of the privy seal and bishop of Chichester, iii. 34; appointed to treat for the marriage of Henry Sixth with Margaret of Anjou, 36; negotiates a truce with France, 60; charged with misrepresenting the conduct of the duke of York in Normandy, 62; withdraws from the cabinet, 63; killed at Portsmouth, 78.
- Monasteries*, their important uses, v. 89.
- Anglo-Norman, their restoration and regulation by Lanfranc, v. 87.
- Montague*, Lord, defeats the Lancastrian forces at Hegeley Moor, iii. 239; and again at the battle of Hexham, *ib.*; created earl of Northumberland, 240.
- Montford*, Simon de, engages in the crusade against the Albigenses, i. 442; killed at the siege of Thoulouse, 444.
- Montserrat*, the marquis of, made king of Thessalonica, &c. ii. 38.
- Moravia*, its population in the eleventh century, i. 43.
- Moravians*, the, driven from Hungary by the Hungarians, i. 18, *note*.
- Moray and Douglas*, Earl of, entrusted by Robert Bruce with the command of the Scottish forces against Edward the Third, ii. 169; retreats without fighting, after devastating the English frontiers, 177.
- Morcar*, aspires to the throne of England after the death of Harold, i. 82; makes his submission to king William, 90; revolts, 95; treacherously seized by him, and committed to prison, 106; released from his imprisonment by order of William while on his death bed, 126.
- Moreville*, Hugh de, conspires to kill Thomas à Becket, i. 266.
- Morgan* of Kidwelly, his treachery towards Richard the Third, iii. 510.
- Morley*, Daniel, studies the sciences from the Arabians in Spain, iv. 382.
- Mortimer*, joins the conspiracy against Edward the Second, ii. 154.
- created earl of March, ii. 178; seized and executed, 180.
- Earl, attacks Owen Glendower, and is taken prisoner, ii. 355.
- Mortimer's Cross*, battle of, iii. 219.
- Morton*, bishop of Ely, his history and appointments, iii. 351; sent prisoner to Brecon by the duke of Gloucester, 420; plans with Buckingham to place the earl of Richmond on the throne, 473; made archbishop of Canterbury, iv. 55.
- Moscow*, the city of, founded, ii. 15, *note*.
- Mowbray*, Earl of Northumbria, treacherously slays Malcolm king of Scotland, i. 159; imprisoned by William Rufus, *ib.*

N.

- Naples*, becomes subject to the Normans, i. 54.
- NAPOLEON Bonaparte, on the wants of society, v. 98.
- Natural Philosophy*, cultivated by the Arabians, iv. 395.

Naval engagement between the Cinque Ports' fleet and a French fleet, ii. 76.

Naval victory, signal, obtained by Edward III. over the French, ii. 191.

Navarre, the Christian kingdom of, its origin, i. 55; etymology of the name, *ib. note*.

Neil, brother of Robert Bruce, shares his exile and sufferings, ii. 104; taken prisoner, and beheaded, 110.

Netter, Thomas, (or Waldensis) the champion of popery against Wicliffe, iii. 139.

New Forest, Hampshire, formed by William the Conqueror, i. 129; popular traditions respecting, *ib. note*.

Nicole de Trailli, who he was, iv. 284.

Nobility of England, their character and depredations in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, i. 452; state of, on the death of Edward the Fourth, iii. 348.

Nominalists and *Realists*, account of, iv. 499.

Norfolk, Earl of, conspires with other Norman barons against William the Conqueror, i. 114; defeated, and forced to quit the kingdom, 115.

— Duke of, assists in the murder of the duke of Gloucester, ii. 311; his conversation respecting the king's designs against certain barons disclosed by Henry of Lancaster, 313; prepares for a trial at battle with him, 315; is banished the kingdom, 316.

— Duke of, commands his forces against the earl of Richmond in the battle of Bosworth Field, iii. 521; killed in the engagement, 529.

Normandy, political effects of its association with England, i. 1; ceded to Rollo and the Northmen, 63; state of, in the tenth century, 66; civilized and improved by Rollo, 68; lost to the English crown by king John, 406.

Normans, their origin, i. 60; invade France under Rollo, 62; and previously under Hastings, *ib.*; obtain the province of Normandy, 64; their national character, 65. 130; embrace Christianity, 70; invade England, 72; establish themselves in Naples and Sicily, 54; their new mode of fighting, 76.

Northampton, parliament held at, by Henry the Second, at which Becket was impeached, i. 248.

— battle of, iii. 210.

Northern tribes of Europe, their first incursions into the southern states, i. 5.

Northmen, their irruptions into the south of Europe, i. 15; subdued in England by Alfred, *ib.*; colonize Normandy, and give sovereigns to England, 16; invade Ireland, 290.

Northumberland, duke of, joins Henry of Lancaster on his landing in Yorkshire, ii. 322; secures the person of Richard II. by a stratagem at Conway, 329; defeats the Scots under earl

Douglas at Hamildon Hill, 353; conspires against the king, 356; taken prisoner and beheaded, 361, and *note*.

Northumberland, Earl of, killed at the first battle of St. Albans, iii. 186.

— the Earl of (son of the preceding earl) appointed to the command of the north with Lord Clifford, iii. 204; killed at the battle of Towton, 230.

— Earl of, his hesitating and ambiguous conduct at the battle of Bosworth Field, iii. 523; killed by some insurgents, iv. 67.

Northumbria, devastated by William I. in revenge for the encouragement given by it to the Danish invasion, i. 102.

Norway, political state of, in the eleventh century, i. 29; its power destroyed by the death of Harold Hardrada, *ib.*; converted to Christianity, 30, *note*; state of, from the eleventh to the fourteenth century, ii. 3; appended to Sweden, and afterwards to Denmark, 4.

Norwegians, their character in the twelfth century, ii. 4, *note*.

Nouredin, acquires the sovereignty of Aleppo, i. 346; overruns

Egypt, 347; his death, 348.

Novogorod, founded by the Slavi, i. 37; taken by the Scandinavian sea-kings, 38; etymology of the name, *ib. note*; considered one of the first capitals of Russia, ii. 12; its early commercial celebrity, 26.

O.

Obodriti, or Reregi, a branch of the Slavi tribe, i. 35, *note*; their idolatrous worship, ii. 9.

Ockham, W. 'the invincible doctor' of the scholastic philosophy, iv. 472; on the Universals, 492.

Occleve, Thomas, account of his poems, v. 367.

Oder, the, republic and emporium of the Slavi upon, i. 36.

Odo, bishop of Bayeux, joined with his brother William Fitz-osborne in the charge of the kingdom, during the absence of William I. in Normandy, i. 91; representation of him on the Bayeux tapestry, *ib. note*; arrested, and sent into confinement in Normandy, 121; released from his imprisonment, by order of his brother William the First, while on his death-bed, 126; enters into a confederacy to place Robert of Normandy on the English throne, 141; assists him in his invasion of England, and is defeated with disgrace, 144.

Oester-reich, or eastern kingdom, origin of the name of Austria, i. 44.

Olaf, forcibly establishes Christianity in Norway, i. 30, *note*.

— king of Sweden, his subjects bargain with him to permit the introduction of Christianity, on condition of preserving the temple at Upsal, i. 32, *note*.

— *Tryggvason*, the northern sea-king, his dexterity, i. 65, *note*.

- Olaf Kyrre*, king of Norway, declines the command of the Danish expedition intended for the invasion of England, i. 122, *note*.
- Oland Isles*, the language of, approaches the English, i. 33, *note*.
- Olaus*, king of Denmark, permits his chief archbishop, and others of his subjects, to join the crusades, i. 31.
- Olave*, king of Norway, marries the daughter of Sveno, i. 100; promotes the prosperity of his country, *ib. note*.
- Oldcastle*, Sir John, persecuted and burnt for heresy, on account of his embracing Wicliffe's principles, ii. 472; burlesque verses composed on him, iii. 144, *note*.
- Oldenburg*, the metropolis of the Wagri, i. 34, *note*; the see of, re-established, after being destroyed by the Slavi, ii. 10.
- Old Man of the Mountains*, head of a Persian tribe, i. 386, *note*; origin of the designation, ii. 55, *note*.
- Oleron*, privileges granted to it, i. 400.
- Oliphant*, Sir William, defends Stirling against Edward the First, ii. 95.
- Omar*, caliph, burns the Alexandrian library, iv. 348.
- Ordeal*, trial by, abolished in England, i. 432, *note*.
- Ordericus Vitalis*, his character of the Scotch, i. 96, *note*; his condemnation of the severities of William I. against the Northumbrians, 102, *note*.
- Orgers*, the, invade Europe, i. 34.
- Orientalis Marchia*, a name of Austria, i. 44, *note*.
- Orleans*, the siege of, ii. 513; delivered by Joan of Arc, 572.
- Maid of. See *Joan of Arc*.
- Duke of, challenges Henry the Fourth to a single combat, ii. 361; contends for the crown of France, 362; assassinated, *ib.*
- Duke of, released from his captivity in England, iii. 31; specimens of his poetry, *ib. note*.
- Ostro Gothia*, a name of Austria, i. 44, *note*.
- Othman*, the Arabian caliph, seditious tumults during his reign, i. 303, *note*.
- Otho the Great*, rescues Europe from the Hungarians and the Slavi, i. 20; crowned king of Italy, 23; establishes christianity among the Slavi, 35, *note*; promotes the prosperity of the German cities, ii. 34.
- the emperor, excommunicated by the pope, i. 413, *note*.
- Otto*, refuses the imperial dignity in Germany, i. 17, *note*.
- Oviedo*, the Christian kingdom of, in Spain, its origin, i. 55.
- Owen Glendower*, his insurrectionary war against Henry the Fourth, ii. 354.
- *Gwynedd*, defeats the English forces led by Henry II. in person, in the woods of Eulo, i. 231.
- *Tudor*, marries the widow of Henry the Fifth, and by this marriage becomes the grandfather of Henry the Seventh, iv. 47; killed at the battle of Mortimer's Cross, iii. 219.

Owl and the Nightingale, account of the poem so called, v. 217.
Oxford, Earl of, a warm partisan of Henry the Sixth, iii. 356;
 joins the earl of Richmond, 498; commands at the battle of
 Bosworth Field, 522.

P.

Pacenati, a name of the Scythians, i. 19, *note*.
Paganism, its rites introduced into Christian worship, v. 24, 40;
 eradicated by the Gothic invaders of Europe, 28.
Pages, the combat of, at the siege of Orleans, ii. 521.
Painting, introduced into Russia from Greece in the tenth cen-
 tury, i. 39.
Palestine, its state in the 13th century, ii. 39.
Pandulf, the pope's legate, king John resigns his crown to his
 hands, i. 414.
Pannonia, (Hungary) depopulated in the war between the Avari
 and Charlemagne, i. 18, *note*.
 — a name of Austria, i. 44, *note*.
Papacy, the state of in the eleventh century, i. 54.
Papal government, rise and influence of, v. 29.
 — schism, effect of, in weakening men's attachment to papal
 christianity, v. 147.
 — christianity, its rise in England, v. i.; attacks on, from the
 eighth to the fourteenth century, 115.
 — authority in England, resistance of the English clergy to,
 v. 148; measures of the English sovereigns to diminish it, 150.
Paris, besieged by the Northmen, i. 62, 63.
Parliaments, their antiquity in Europe, i. 3; established in Russia,
ib. *note*.
Parr, Dr. his account of Dick's Well, iii. 525, *note*.
Patay, the battle of, won by Joan of Arc, ii. 581.
Paulicians, a Christian sect, their origin in Armenia, v. 123;
 emigrate to Europe, 126; their connexion with the Protestant
 reformers, 135, *note*.
Pavia, the city of, its early celebrity, ii. 30; its complaints against
 Milan, *ib.*
Peacock, Reginald, preaches against the popish doctrines, iii. 129;
 committed prisoner to the abbey of Thorney, 143.
Pelayo, Don, his opposition to the Moors in Spain, i. 55; his
 actions the subject of Southey's "Don Rodrigo," and of Sir
 Walter Scott's "Vision of Don Roderick," *ib.* *note*.
Peroun, god of thunder, an idol of the Slavi, i. 35, *note*; dragged
 by a horse's tail, and thrown into the Borysthenes, 39, *note*.
Persia, conquered by the Mohamedans, i. 302, *note*; its ancient
 notions, v. 23, 7.
Peter of Pisa, his lectures on grammar attended by Charlemagne,
 i. 13, *note*.
 — Lombard, his sentences, iv. 470; analysis of, v. 73.

Peter, abbot of Clugny, studies the sciences under the Arabians in Spain, iv. 378.

— the Hermit, makes a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, i. 319; his early history, *ib. note*; persuades the sovereigns of Europe to attack the Turks, 321; leads the second body of crusaders, 325; escapes to Constantinople, after the defeat of the crusaders by Solyman, 327.

— the Cruel, king of Castile, involves himself by his atrocities in a war with France, ii. 223; driven from his kingdom, 227; obtains the assistance of the Black Prince, who reinstates him on his throne, 229; his ingratitude to the prince, 230; his death, 234.

Petrarch, his contributions to Italian poetry, ii. 39.

Philip I. of France, incites the vengeance of William the Conqueror by a jest, i. 123.

— Augustus, king of France, proceeds for the crusades, i. 363; quits Messina for Palestine, 368; assists at the siege of Acre, 375; quits Palestine for Europe, 379; sides with prince Arthur against king John, 406; obtains possession of Normandy, *ib.*; defeats John in Poitou, 415; adds Normandy, &c. to his territories, ii. 30; killed before Avignon in the crusade against the Albigenses, i. 443.

— III. of France, his prosperous reign, ii. 32.

— IV. or the Fair, king of France, his contests with Edward the First, &c. ii. 32; invades the territories of Edward in Gascony, 76.

— V. or the Long, king of France, ii. 32.

— VI. or de Valois, chief incidents of his reign, ii. 33; contests the crown of France with Edward the Third, 183; his cautious policy on Edward's invasion of France, 189; defeated at the battle of Cressy, 205; attempts ineffectually to relieve Calais, 211; his death, 214.

— *du Than*, an early writer of Anglo-Norman vernacular poetry, iv. 206.

Philippa, daughter of the count of Hainault, married to Edward the Third, ii. 178; heads the army against the king of Scotland, 210; successfully intercedes for the citizens of Calais, 212; her death, 238.

Piercy, Sir Ralph, killed at the battle of Hegeley Moor, iii. 239.

Piers Plouhman, an early writer of English poetry, v. 237.

Pilgrim, the, account of the poem so called, v. 237.

Pilgrimage, the habit of, begun in Europe, i. 44.

— to Jerusalem, its origin, &c. i. 316.

Pilgrimages, ill effects of, iii. 137.

— through Greece, their effects in promoting a love of study, iv. 157.

Pilgrims, Christian, to Jerusalem, their first journeys, i. 316; their sufferings, 318.

- Piphles*, a Christian sect, their derivation from the Paulicians, v. 128.
- Piracy*, cessation of, in Norway, i. 29.
- Pisa*, its early commercial celebrity, ii. 26.
- Pisans*, the, obtain settlements at Constantinople, ii. 38.
- Placentia*, council held at, on the subject of the crusades, i. 321.
- Pleinen*, its idolatrous worship, ii. 9, *note*.
- Podaga*, a Slavonic idol worshipped at Pleinen, ii. 9, *note*.
- Poetry*, Anglo-Saxon, its style and decline, iv. 307.
- Anglo-Norman, its character and style, iv. 310.
- vernacular, of England, its history, iv. 183, 197.
- English, history of, from the twelfth century to the middle of the fifteenth, iv. 204.
- Potaiers*, the battle of, ii. 214.
- Polabi*, their idolatrous worship, ii. 9, *note*.
- Polabingi*, a branch of the Slavi tribe, i. 34, *note*.
- Poland*, character of its inhabitants in the eleventh century, i. 42, and *note*; state of, from the eleventh to the fourteenth century, ii. 10; invaded by Frederick Barbarossa, 11.
- Pole*, Michael de la, earl of Suffolk, impeached, ii. 295; escapes to the continent, 302.
- Poll tax*, oppressive, levied by Richard II. and the insurrections produced by it, ii. 253.
- Polovtsi*, a Tartar nation, their invasions of Russia, ii. 15.
- Polytheism*, its misconceptions as to the causes of things, iv. 361.
- Pope*, the, established in territorial sovereignty by Charlemagne, i. 14; creation of his temporal power, v. 29.
- Popery*, gradual decline of, in England, iii. 96. *et seqq*; books written against, 133.
- Porphyry's* Isagoge, analysis of, iv. 411.
- Portugal*, first formation of the kingdom of, i. 58; its Cortez in 1143, *ib*.
- assisted against the Moors by the fleet of Richard the First, i. 363.
- Prelates* of England, their vices in the fifteenth century, iii. 127.
- Prester John*, a Tartar chief, embraces Christianity, i. 447.
- Printing*, the art of, introduced into England, iii. 329, *note*.
- Prono*, an idol of the Suevi, i. 36, *note*.
- Prove*, a Slavonian idol, worshipped at Aldenberg, ii. 9, *note*.
- Provençal* language and literature, i. 51.
- Prusci*, occupy Prussia, i. 41; Semland, 42, *note*.
- Prussia*, character of its population in the eleventh century, i. 41; converted to Christianity, 42, and *note*.
- Psalter* of Cashel, an ancient Irish chronicle, account of, i. 278, *note*.
- Pullen*, Cardinal, a supporter of the scholastic philosophy, iv. 477.
- Purgatory*, the doctrine of, its use in the Catholic church, v. 55.

R.

Raciburg, the see of, re-established after being destroyed by the Slavi, ii. 10.

Radigast, the idol of the Retharii, i. 35, *note*.

— a Slavonian idol, worshipped by the Obotriti, ii. 9, *note*.

Ragnar Lodbrog, the northern scald and sea-king, i. 62.

Raimond de Agiles, accompanies a body of crusaders, i. 335.

Ramiro, Don, obtains the kingdom of Arragon, i. 56.

Ranulph, Flambarð, succeeds Lanfranc as the confidential adviser of William Rufus, i. 150; his history and character, 151, *note*; invites Robert to contend for the crown of England, after his brother Henry's accession, 172; his character, *ib. note*.

Ratzeburg, metropolis of the Polabingi, i. 34, *note*.

Rhymond, count of Provence, leads a body of Gascons and Spaniards to the Crusades, i. 335; his death, 339, *note*.

Redmore, the field of, the real site of the battle called the battle of Bosworth Field, between Richard the Third and the earl of Richmond, iii. 528, *note*.

Reformation, Protestant, its connexion with the Paulicians, Albigenses, &c. v. 135, *note*.

— of the church of England, causes which gradually operated to produce it, iii. 96, 127; progress towards, before Wicliffe, v. 146.

Relics, v. 50.

Religion, history of, in England, v. 1.

Reregi, or Obodriti, a branch of the Slavi tribe, i. 34, *note*.

Retharii, a branch of the Slavi tribe, i. 34, *note*.

Rethra, the metropolis of the Retharii, i. 34, *note*.

Rhetorical literature of Rome, its evil effects, iv. 129.

Rhys, the Welsh prince, repressed by the forces of William I. under his Norman commanders, i. 112, *note*.

Rice ap Thomas, Sir, his assistance in Wales promised to the earl of Richmond, iii. 510; joins him at Shrewsbury, 513.

Richard I. duke of Normandy, i. 70.

— II. duke of Normandy, *ib.*

— I. (Cœur de Lion) king of England, his character, i. 295; conspires against his father, 296; the English swear fealty to him in his father's lifetime, 299; incited to undertake a crusade, 351, 358; his character, 356; origin of his designation, Cœur de Lion, *ib.*; his conduct on his accession to the English throne, *ib.*; liberates his mother Eleanor from her imprisonment, 359; his coronation, *ib.*; his preparations for the crusade, 362; proceeds to Sicily, 363; his fleet, on the voyage to the Mediterranean, assists the Portuguese against the Moors, *ib.*; his strange conduct during his stay in Sicily, and his adjustment of his dispute with Tancred, the king of the island, 364; quits Sicily for Palestine, and obtains possession of the island of Cyprus, 368; marries Berengaria, daughter of the

king of Navarre, at Cyprus, 369; arrives at Acre, and aids in the capture of the city, 375; advances into Palestine, 380; defeats Saladin near Jaffa, 382; prevented by the inclemency of the weather from advancing to Jerusalem, 385; charged with being privy to the assassination of Conrad at Tyre, 386; defeats Saladin, and makes peace with him, 390; quits Palestine, 392; his dangerous journey by land through Germany, 393; taken captive near Vienna, and imprisoned, by order of the emperor, Henry the Sixth, in the Tyrol, 395; his release, 398; his contest with his brother John, and Philip of France, 399; killed in Normandy, 400; effects of his reign, 401; his remarkable saying, *ib. note*; his literary productions, 402, *note*.

Richard Cœur de Lion, the romance of, v. 241.

— II. made Prince of Wales, ii. 237; his splendid entrance into London after the death of Edward the Third, 243; his coronation, 245; holds his first parliament, *ib.*; continues the French war, 247; pecuniary difficulties of his government, 251; popular insurrections against it, 254; their causes stated, 264; the king's personal character, 273; concurs in the arrest of the duke of Lancaster, but is afterwards reconciled to him, 281; impeachment of his ministers, 295; charged with plotting the death of the duke of Gloucester, 299; his violent measures against the barons, 302; claims the right of government on coming of age, 304; gives a splendid tournament, *ib.*; betrays the duke of Gloucester into an arrest, and causes him to be murdered, 309; attends the execution of the earl of Arundel, 311; obliged by his unpopularity to surround himself with a strong guard, 312; his intentions respecting certain barons disclosed by the duke of Norfolk, and declared in parliament by Henry of Lancaster, 313; banishes both those noblemen, 315; banishes the earl of Northumberland and his son Hotspur, and leads an army to Ireland, 317; his campaign there, 318, *note*; disaffection of the nation towards him, 321; Henry of Lancaster, by the invitation of the people, lands in Yorkshire to take the government from him, 322; sends the earl of Salisbury to England to raise a force to oppose Henry, 323; arrives at Milford, and proceeds to join Salisbury at Conway, 325; taken by the duke of Northumberland, 330; delivered to Henry of Lancaster at Flint, and conducted to London, 335; resigned his crown, 337; adjudged to perpetual imprisonment, 338; his character, *ib.*; his marriages, 346, *note*; his death at Pomfret Castle, 350; state of his skull on a recent examination of his tomb, 352, *note*; his character from a contemporary chronicle, *ib. note*.

— Duke of Gloucester, escapes to Utrecht after the death of his father the duke of York, at the battle of Wakefield, iii. 219, *note*; lands in England with his brother Edward the Fourth, 280; his bravery at the battle of Barnet, 297; also at the battle of Tewkesbury, 319; the tradition of his murdering Henry VI.

refuted, 319; marries the lady Anne, daughter of the earl of Warwick, 324; wrongly charged with being the cause of Clarence's death, 326; leads an army into Scotland against James the Third, 336, *note*; prejudices against him, and difficulties of ascertaining his real history and character, 344; his honourable conduct on the accession of Edward the Fifth, 376; leagues with the duke of Buckingham against lord Rivers, &c. 377; obtains possession of the king, 383; chosen protector, 387; makes preparations for Edward's coronation, 404; causes lord Hastings to be beheaded in the Tower, 416; obtains possession of the duke of York, and lodges him in the Tower, 420; takes measures to usurp the throne, 423; obtains possession of it, 426. See *Richard III.*

Richard III. his precautions to secure his throne, iii. 430; crowned at Westminster, 435; makes a progress through the country, 439; receives the congratulations of Isabella queen of Castile, 441; crowned a second time at York, 445; makes his son prince of Wales, 448; conspiracies begin to form against him, 452; spreads a report of the death of the young princes in the Tower, 453; inquiry into the share he had in the murder of them, 454; informed of the proceedings of Buckingham and others to raise the earl of Richmond to the throne, 475; takes vigorous measures to repress the revolt, 476; causes Buckingham to be beheaded, 480; takes measures to seize Richmond in Bretagne, 483; his mental agitations, 485; his repentance, 488; prepares to oppose the threatened invasion of Richmond, 489; prevails on the queen of Edward the Fourth, and her daughters, to attend his court, 494; death of his son, 496; death of his queen, 501; rumour of his intended marriage with Elizabeth, daughter of his brother Edward the Fourth, 502; publicly declares its falsehood, 505; becomes unpopular by a forced "benevolence," 508; his perturbations on the night previous to the battle of Bosworth Field, 520; his bravery and death in that engagement, 525; buried at Leicester, 529; his character, iv. 1; reasons of his being called a tyrant, 15; his repression of the retinue of the great, 21; his conduct towards the church, 22; causes Henry VI. to be buried at Windsor, 30; his personal tastes and pleasures, 31; his attention to trade, 34; the question considered, whether Columbus was engaged in his service, 38, *note*.

Richmond, countess of, mother of Henry VII. attainted, iii. 492; her character, iv. 59, *note*.

— Earl of, see *Henry IV.*

Rime, its facility, and its advantages to the poetry of England, iv. 316; its origin and progress in the middle ages, &c. 322; specimens of, from St. Austin, 324; Venantius Fortunatus, 325; Columbanus, 326; Drepanius Florus, *ib.*; St. Aldhelm, *ib.*; Anaurin, 328; Taliesin, *ib.*; Llywarch Hen, *ib.*; Myrddhin, 329;

- Boniface, *ib.*; Theobaldus, 331; Otfrid, 332; Hartmannus, *ib.*; St. Bernard, *ib.*; Anselm, 333; Peter, *ib.*; Hoveden, 334; Berterus, *ib.*
- Rivers*, Lord, taken prisoner in assisting Somerset to obtain possession of Calais, iii. 204; treasurer of England under Edward the Fourth, 250; put to death, 256.
- Earl, made the governor of Prince Edward, iii. 342; his character and influence, 348; accompanies the young king from Ludlow on his way to London, 377; arrested by Gloucester and Buckingham, 382; beheaded, 427.
- Robert*, Duke of Normandy (son of William the Conqueror) left in charge of Normandy with his mother Matilda, i. 94; his rebellion, 117; wounds his father in a personal rencontre, and permits him to pass unmolested, 120; makes his peace with him, but again quits his court, *ib.*; obtains the dukedom of Normandy from him on his death bed, 125; his character, 142; called by his father *Court Hose*, or short breeches, *ib. note*; sells part of Normandy to his brother Henry, 143, *note*; invades England to endeavour to obtain the crown, but is defeated, *ib.*; his ill government of Normandy, 145; makes peace with William, *ib.*; mortgages Normandy for three years to William, on going to the crusades, 158; declines the kingdom of Jerusalem, 172; marries Sibylla, the daughter of a Norman chieftain in Apulia, *ib.*; invades England after the accession of his brother Henry, *ib.*; makes peace with him, 173; attacked by Henry in Normandy, 177; defeated and taken prisoner at the battle of Tenchebray, 178; imprisoned in Cardiff Castle, 179; his treatment in his captivity, 180; not certain that he was deprived of his sight, *ib.*; his son escapes from the attempts of Henry to seize him, and made earl of Flanders, 181; proceeds for the crusades, 335; returns home after the capture of Jerusalem, 343; dies in Cardiff Castle, ii. 192.
- Count of Gloucester, (natural son of Henry I.) swears fealty to Stephen, i. 200; eludes the perfidious attempts of Stephen to seize him, 203; espouses the cause of his sister Matilda, 205; takes Stephen prisoner, 206; taken prisoner himself, and exchanged for the king, 209; his death, *ib.*
- King of Scotland, declares war against England, and his troops defeated under earl Douglas at Hamildon Hill, ii. 353.
- younger son of Baldwin count of Flanders, his romantic attempts to obtain a kingdom, i. 47, *note*; obtains the government of Friesland, 48, *note*.
- *de Belesme*, his ferocious character, i. 456.
- *Retenensis*, translates the Koran from the Arabic, iv. 379.
- *of Gloucester*, account of his poetry, v. 216; specimens of his English style, 439.
- Robin of Redesdale*, heads an insurrection against Edward the Fourth, iii. 254.

- Rognvaldr*, the father of Rollo, i. 68, *note*.
Rokesby, Thomas de, obtains a grant from Edward III. for discovering the Scottish army, ii. 174, *note*.
Rolle, Richard, hermit of Hampole, account of his poem of "The Prikke of Conscience," v. 232; his prose style, 440.
Rollo the Norman, banished from Norway, i. 60; defeated by Alfred in his attempt to invade England, 61; invades France, 62; obtains the province of Normandy, and the daughter of the French king, 64; refuses to do homage by bending the knee, *ib*.
 — king of Norway, his wise measures for government of his kingdom, i. 69; embraces Christianity, 70; his successors, *ib*.
Roman de Rou, i. 60.
Romances, fictitious Anglo-Norman, their origin, iv. 227.
Rosamund, the Fair, the mistress of Henry the Second, some notice of her, i. 295.
Rosary, the devotion of, instituted by St. Dominic, v. 102.
Roscelin of Bretagne, the father of the scholastic philosophy, iv. 458.
Ross, Lord, beheaded after the battle of Hexham, iii. 240.
Rosscia, the supposed ancient appellation of Russia, i. 37, *note*.
Rouen, its disastrous siege and capture by Henry the Fifth, ii. 465, and *note*.
Roum, the Turkish kingdom of, established, i. 308.
Rowley, Thomas, controversy on his poems, v. 389.
Roxoliana, the supposed origin of the name of Russia, i. 37, *note*.
Rudolph of Hapsburg, made emperor of Germany, ii. 23.
Rugen, its idolatrous worship, ii. 9, *note*.
Rurick, the Scandinavian sea-king, and his companions, settle in Russia, i. 37, *note*.
Russ, a prince of the Poloni, supposed to have given his name to Russia, i. 37, *note*.
Russia, its occupation by the Slavonians, i. 37; its progress in civilization, 38; invaded by the Scandinavian vikings or sea-kings, *ib*.; derivations of the name, 37, *note*.
 — receives Christianity from Greece, i. 24.
 — the sovereign of, married to the daughter of Harold, i. 100, *note*; its ancient literature, 40; its poets, ii. 17.
 — state of from the eleventh to the fourteenth century, ii. 12.
Russians invade the Grecian provinces of Europe and Asia in the tenth century, i. 39; receive Christianity from Greece, *ib*.; their custom when defeated, 40, *note*.
Rutland, son of the duke of York, murdered by lord Clifford, after the battle of Wakefield, iii. 218.

S.

- Sætt*, the Norwegian name of Sidon, ii. 4, *note*.
St. Albans, the first battle of, in the civil wars of York and Lancaster, iii. 187; second battle of, 220.

- St. Andrews*, bishop of, invites Edward the First to interfere in the affairs of Scotland, ii. 70.
- St. Bernard*, the opponent of Abelard, iv. 460, 465.
- St. Canute* (see *Canute IV.*) projects the invasion of England, i. 121; sedition of his armament, 122; his death, 123, and *note*.
- St. Columba*, founds a monastery in Ireland, in the sixth century, i. 281.
- St. Dominic*, or Domingo, one of the first ministers of the inquisition, i. 444, *note*.
- St. Francis*, founds an order of preaching friars, v. 105.
- St. Jago*, in Galicia, number of pilgrimages to, from England, in 1434 and 1445, iii. 138.
- St. Leger*, Sir Thomas, married to duchess of Exeter, sister of Richard the Third, iii. 481; revolts against Richard; is taken and executed, *ib*.
- St. Patrick* introduces Christianity, and the use of letters, into Ireland, i. 278; his birth place, *ib. note*.
- St. Severe*, marshal, a French commander under Joan of Arc at the siege of Orleans, ii. 557.
- Saintrailles*, *Poton de*, a French commander under Joan of Arc at the siege of Orleans, ii. 557.
- Saints*, lives of, early written in verse, iv. 306.
- invocation of, in the Catholic church, v. 51.
- Saladin*, captures Jerusalem, takes the cross from the temple, and treats it with indignity, i. 298, and *note*; made governor of Alexandria, and soldan of Egypt, 347; raised to the dignity of caliph, 348; possesses himself of the kingdom of Syria, and takes Jerusalem from the Christians, 349; receives the first check to his conquests at Tyre, from which he is expelled by Conrad of Montserrat, 371; his character, *ib*.; his hatred of Christianity, 373; his cruelty, 374; assists the besieged garrison of Acre, *ib*.; receives knighthood from Enfidus de Turo, *ib. note*; defeated by Richard I. near Jaffa, 382; again defeated by Richard, and makes peace with him, 390; his death, 391.
- Salisbury*, Earl of, sent by Richard the Second from Ireland to oppose the projects of Henry of Lancaster, ii. 323; plots against Henry, and is put to death, 349.
- Earl of, appointed warden of the west marches, &c. iii. 182; espouses the cause of the duke of York against Somerset, 184; defeats the royal army at Bloreheath, 200; retires to Calais, after the dispersion of the Yorkists at Ludlow, 204; marches to London with Edward, son of the duke of York, and the earl of Warwick, 209; beheaded after the battle of Wakefield, 219.
- Earl of, defeats the French army at the battle of Crevant, ii. 490; commands the siege of Orleans, 512; his death, 515.
- John of, attacks the scholastic philosophy, iv. 474.
- Sancho*, king of Navarre, submits his dispute with Alphonso, king of Castile, to the arbitration of Henry the Second, i. 299, *note*.

- Sanforde*, Sir Brian, joins the earl of Richmond, iii. 518.
- Sanguin*, the Turkish chieftain, his character, i. 346.
- Sanson de Nanteul's* proverbs, early specimens of Anglo-Norman vernacular poetry, iv. 213.
- Santre*, William, burnt for heresy in the reign of Henry the Fourth, ii. 353.
- Sarkiom*, the ancient Norwegian name of the Moors, ii. 4, *note*.
- Savage*, Sir John, his assistance promised to the Earl of Richmond, iii. 510; joins him before the battle of Bosworth Field, 518; killed in Bretagne, iv. 67, *note*.
- Saxons* of Germany, subdued and civilized by Charlemagne, i. 11; their distress in consequence of the invasion of the Hungarians, i. 20, *note*.
- the, invade England, i. 5.
- Saxony*, reduced into a province, and divided into eight bishopricks, by Charlemagne, i. 11, *note*.
- Say*, Lord, beheaded by the insurgents under John Cade, iii. 84.
- Lord, slain at the battle of Barnet, iii. 299.
- Scales*, Lord, collects a navy to assist Somerset to obtain possession of Calais, iii. 204; attempts to defend London against the Yorkists, under the earl of Warwick, 208; beheaded by the Yorkists, 212; prevents an invasion by Queen Margaret, 252.
- Scholastic* logic, defects of, iv. 483.
- philosophy, the history of, iv. 445.
- Scone*, the celebrated stone of, sent to Westminster by Edward the First, ii. 81.
- Schools* for teaching Latin, &c. established throughout England, iv. 156.
- Scot*, Michael, his acquaintance with the Arabic mathematical sciences, iv. 382.
- Scotch*, their character in the eleventh century, i. 96, *note*; their character in the twelfth century, i. 199, *note*; their ruinous defeat at the battle of the Standard, 204.
- Scotland*, its deficiency in trees accounted for, ii. 295.
- the king of, refuses to do homage to Stephen for his English demesnes, i. 200; invades England against Henry II. defeated, and becomes a feudatory of the English sovereign, 296; attends the coronation of Edward the First, ii. 57.
- its union with England projected by Edward the First, ii. 67; the parliament of, assemble at Norham at his desire, 70; Baliol made king of, 74; submits to Edward I. after the defeat and capture of Baliol, 81; liberated by William Wallace, 89; falls again under the dominion of Edward, 98; Robert Bruce causes himself to be crowned king of, 101.
- Scrop*, Henry le, conspires against Henry the Fifth, ii. 394.
- Scythians*, their customs, i. 19, *note*.
- Seaton*, Sir Christopher, taken prisoner and beheaded, ii. 111.
- Seiffeddin*, succeeds his father Sanguin as king of Moussoul, i. 346.
- Sentmort*, Lord, attainted by Richard the Third, iii. 493, *note*.

- Serkland*, ancient Norwegian name of Africa, ii. 3, *note*.
Serle, one of the murderers of the duke of Gloucester, ii. 311.
Servia and Croatia, their state, ii. 44.
Seva, an idol of the Slavi, i. 36, *note*.
Sheep, Cotswold, exported to Spain in the fifteenth century, iii. 263, *note*.
Sheik, meaning of the term, ii. 44, *note*.
Shore, Jane, arrested under a charge of a political conspiracy, and forced to do penance, iii. 418: her death not caused by famine, by the order of the duke of Gloucester, 419.
Shrewsbury, Earl of, his forces, under his uncle Talbot, join the earl of Richmond, iii. 514.
Sicilian Vespers, a retaliation for the cruelties of Charles of Anjou, ii. 30, *note*.
Sicily becomes subject to the Normans, i. 54; the crown of, offered by the pope to Richard, brother of Henry III. and granted to Edmund his brother, 448; the vernacular poetry of, supersedes the Provençal, ii. 39.
Sidon taken by the crusaders under Sigurdr, king of Norway, i. 30.
Sienna, the republic of, ii. 39, *note*.
Sigismund, emperor of Germany, visits London, and made a knight of the garter, ii. 464, *note*.
Sigtun. See *Birca*.
Sigurdr, or Siward, king of Norway, discontinues the practice of piracy, embarks with the crusaders, and takes Sidon, i. 30; his expedition to Palestine, the last effusion of ancient Norwegian heroism, ii. 3.
Simnel, Lambert, set up as a claimant for the throne against Henry the Seventh, iv. 62; crowned in Ireland, 63, *note*; taken at the battle of Stoke, and made a turnspit in the king's kitchen, 66.
Siwa, a Slavonian idol worshipped by the Polabi, ii. 9, *note*.
Siward, King of Norway. See *Sigurdr*.
Skuli, the nephew of Harold, retires to Norway after Harold's death, i. 82, *note*.
Slavery, domestic, destroyed in Europe by the establishment of Christianity, i. 26.
Slavi, invade Europe, i. 5; repressed by Otho the Great, 20; their settlement in Russia, Germany, &c. 34; their character, *ib.*; derivation of the name, *ib. note*; oppose Christianity, 35; their idolatry, *ib.*; their republic and emporium at Jomsberg, 36; form a settlement in Russia, 37; their progress towards civilization, 38; their character and customs as described by Helmoldus, 43, *note*; their character and customs in the eleventh century, ii. 9; their idolatry, *ib.*
Smith, Sir Sydney, account of his visit to the holy sepulchre at Jerusalem, i. 317, *note*.
Solyman, the Turkish prince, his successes against the Christians,

- and establishment of the kingdom of Roum, i. 309; defeats the crusaders under Walter sans-avoir, 327; defeated by the crusaders at Nice, 335; and at the battle of Doryldun, 337.
- Somerset*, Duke of, commits suicide, iii. 54.
- Duke of, commander of the English forces in France, applies ineffectually for succours, iii. 61; his conduct respecting the violation of the truce by the capture of Fougères in Normandy, 76; driven from Rouen, &c. 77; surrenders Caen to the French, 163; made the favourite adviser of the crown, 166; complaint against him by the duke of York, *ib.*; impeached by him, 169; restored to power, and made governor of Calais, 173; his government overturned by the king's illness, 177; sent to the Tower, *ib.*; his re-ascendency on the king's recovery, 183; killed at the first battle of St. Albans, 188.
- Duke of, appointed captain of Calais, iii. 204; makes fruitless attempts to obtain possession of the town, *ib.*; makes his peace with Edward the Fourth, 236; deserts him and joins the Lancastrians, 238; beheaded after the battle of Hexham, 240.
- the young Duke of, escapes to Flanders after the death of his father at the battle of Hexham, iii. 241; beheaded after the battle of Tewkesbury, 314.
- Sophistical* philosophy of Greece, its evils, iv. 127.
- Sorrel*, Agnes, dissuades Charles VII. from abandoning France in despair during the siege of Orleans, ii. 522; dies suddenly at the abbey of Jamieges, iii. 78, *note*.
- Spain*, invaded by the Suevi, Goths and Vandals, i. 5; invaded by the Mohamedans, 7; its condition under them, 55; state of, in the eleventh century, 57; state of, from the eleventh to the fourteenth century, ii. 36.
- Speculum Ecclesiæ*, by St. Edmund; analysis of, v. 170.
- Spoleto*, Guy, duke of, contends for the sovereignty of Italy, i. 17, 22.
- Squires*, their duty as attendants upon knights, i. 468; meaning of the title, *ib.* *note*.
- Squyr* of Lowe Degree, account of the romance of, v. 242.
- Stafford*, Sir Humphrey, killed in an engagement with the insurgents under Cade, iii. 82.
- Lord, created duke of Buckingham, iii. 38. See *Buckingham*.
- Humphrey, beheaded for joining lord Lovel's insurrection, iv. 57.
- Stanley*, Sir William, deputed to lead the forces of his brother lord Stanley against the earl of Richmond, iii. 516; confers with the earl before the battle of Bosworth Field, 518; joins him during the battle, and decides the victory, 527; places the crown on the earl's head, 529; beheaded for joining in the plot of Perkin Warbeck, iv. 71.
- Lord, his temporising conduct in the civil war, iii. 200; his

- history and character, 353; imprisoned in the Tower by the duke of Gloucester, 416; released, and promoted by him, 433; his hesitating and ambiguous conduct towards Richard the Third, 516; joins the earl of Richmond in the battle of Bosworth Field, 525; created earl of Derby, iv. 53.
- Stephen*, Earl of Blois, proceeds for the crusades, i. 335.
- son of the earl of Blois, on the death of Henry I. obtains the crown of England, i. 197; his popularity, 199; pacifies Geoffry of Anjou, the husband of Matilda, *ib.*; hostilities of his subjects against him, 200; attempts to seize the count of Gloucester, 203; grants Matilda a safe conduct to Bristol, 205; taken prisoner by the earl of Gloucester, and confined in Bristol castle, 207; exchanged for the count of Gloucester, and restored to the crown, 209; is attacked by Henry, the son of Matilda, with whom he enters into an amicable compromise, *ib.*; his death, 210; effects of his reign, *ib.*
- Stigand*, archbishop of Canterbury, supports the pretensions of Edgar Atheling to the English throne, after the death of Harold, i. 82; makes his submission to William the Conqueror, 85; deposed by William, 104.
- Stirling*, besieged and taken by Edward the First, ii. 95.
- Stoke*, battle of, between Henry VII. and the partizans of Simnel, iv. 65.
- Stoke*, R. rector of Braybroke, preaches against the popish doctrines, iii. 127.
- Strange*, Lord, son of lord Stanley, deputed to command his father's forces against the earl of Richmond, iii. 516; confesses his father's secret designs against Richard the Third, 517; narrowly escapes being beheaded, 521.
- Straw*, Jack, one of the leaders of the insurrections in the time of Richard the Second, ii. 256, *note*.
- Strongbow*, Richard earl, enters into a treaty with Dermot king of Leinster to invade Ireland, i. 290; marries Dermot's daughter, 294, *note*.
- Suavi*, the, of Suabia, their contests with the Franks, i. 8.
- Sveno* Tiuffveskeg, king of Denmark, his labours to promote the improvement of his kingdom, i. 31; Adam of Bremen's character of, *ib. note*; his history, 100 and *note*; encourages the cultivation of literature and the spread of Christianity in his dominions, 103.
- the Danish prince, surprized with his comrades by the Turks, and destroyed, i. 340, *note*.
- Svetovid*, the god of the sun and war, an idol of the Slavi, i. 36, *note*.
- Suffolk*, the young earl of, killed at the battle of Agincourt, ii. 456.
- Earl of, appointed to command the siege of Orleans on the death of the earl of Salisbury, ii. 516; forced to raise the siege by Joan of Arc, 572; defeated by her at Jargeau, 578; be-

- comes the favorite of Henry the Sixth, iii. 34; procures the king's marriage with Margaret, daughter of the duke of Anjou, 35; created Marquis of Suffolk, 37; raised to the dukedom, 41; his unpopularity, 47; causes the arrest of the duke of Gloucester, 48; suspected to be the author of his death, 50; and also of an attempt on the life of the lord Cromwell, 59; character of his administration, 60; defends himself before parliament, 63; is impeached, 65; exiled, 69; his letter to his son, 70, *note*; killed on his passage to France, 72; his character, 73.
- Supernatural* fictions of Europe, iv. 292.
- Surrey*, Earl of, commands with his father, the duke of Norfolk, in the battle of Bosworth Field, iii. 519.
- Suspension* in the air, a habit to be learnt, v. 110.
- Swart*, Martin, heads a body of Germans to support the claims of Simnel to the English throne, iv. 65; defeated and slain at the battle of Stoke, 67.
- Sweating* sickness, its first appearance in England, iv. 54, *note*.
- Sweden*, its progress in civilization in the eleventh century, i. 32; state of, from the eleventh to the fourteenth century, ii. 6.
- Swedes*, their character, i. 33.
- Sylvester* II. pope, studies the sciences under the Arabians in Spain, and teaches them in other countries, iv. 376.
- Symeon*, patriarch of Jerusalem, solicits aid from the European Christians against the Turks, i. 319.
- Syria*, conquered by the Mohamedans, i. 302, *note*.

T.

- Tailleur*, William, a priest, preaches against the popish doctrines and customs, iii. 127.
- Talbot*, Lord, joins the duke of Suffolk at the siege of Orleans, ii. 516; forced to retreat by Joan of Arc, 573; defeated and taken prisoner by her at the battle of Patay, 581; liberated by the French king, 582; killed in Gascony, iii. 172.
- son of lord Talbot, killed at the battle of Northampton, iii. 211.
- Sir Gilbert, joins the earl of Richmond with the forces of the earl of Shrewsbury, iii. 514; commands at the battle of Bosworth Field, 522.
- Tancred*, King of Sicily, embarks for the crusades in the train of Bohemund, i. 334; adjusts his disputes with Richard the First, 367.
- Tartar* tribes, invade Europe, i. 5.
- Tartars*, their custom when defeated, i. 40, *note*.
- Templars*, Knights, abolition of the order, and the alleged reasons, ii. 163, *note*.
- Tenchebray*, the battle of, between Robert duke of Normandy and his brother Henry I. i. 179.
- Tewkesbury*, the battle of, iii. 310.

- Thabet ben Corah*, the Arabian philosopher, his celebrity, iv. 392.
Theobald, Archbishop of Canterbury, his death, i. 232.
 — an early writer of Anglo-Norman vernacular poetry, iv. 207.
Theodoric, the Ostro-Gothic king of Italy, a favourer of letters, iv. 121.
Themoria, or Teagh Mor, an ancient Irish city, i. 280, and *note*.
Tin, first found in Germany, i. 439, *note*.
Tocot, Sir Roger, attainted by Richard the Third, iii. 495, *note*.
Togrul Bey, chosen king of the Turks, i. 306.
Tokig, son of Wiggod, slain in assisting William the Conqueror, in a personal rencontre with his son Robert, i. 120, *note*.
Tosti's (the brother of Harold,) two sons, Skuli and Ketill, retire to Norway after their father's death, i. 82.
Tournaments, their origin and use, i. 469.
Towton, the battle of, iii. 228.
Tracy, William de, conspires to kill Thomas à Becket, i. 266.
Transubstantiation, the doctrine of, introduced into the Catholic creed, v. 65.
Tresham, once speaker of the house of commons, murdered, iii. 165.
Tretelgia, (wood cutter,) the name given to a Swedish king on account of the forests he felled to promote agriculture, i. 33, *note*.
Trevisa, Nich. specimen of his English style, v. 449.
Trial at battle, between Henry of Lancaster and the duke of Norfolk, preparations for, ii. 315.
Triglaff, the idol of the Slavi at Jomsberg, i. 36, *note*.
Trinity, the doctrine of, early disputes respecting, v. 23.
Tripolis, taken by the crusaders, i. 344.
Tristrem, Sir, account of the romance of, v. 240.
Trivium and *quadrivium*, the terms which comprised the sciences of the middle ages, iv. 173.
Trollope, Sir Andrew, joins the Yorkists at Calais, iii. 201; goes over to the Lancastrians, 203; killed at the battle of Towton, 230.
Troubadours, the provençal poets, pervade the southern provinces of France in the twelfth century, i. 216; distinguished from the *Trouveurs*, *ib.* *note*; patronised by Henry II. *ib.*; celebrate Eleanor his queen, 217; one of their moral lays, v. 140.
 —, v. 255; spirit and subjects of their poetry, 256; favored by queen Eleanor, 262; their courts of love, 263; two kinds of troubadours, 269.
Trouveurs, the minstrels so called, distinguished from the troubadours, i. 216, *note*; advantages derived from their writings, iv. 311.
Troyes, treaty of, ii. 466.
Turks, their singular custom when defeated, i. 40; their rise in Siberia, 305; conquer Tartary, and enter Hungary, *ib.*; establish the kingdom of Gazna, in Persia, and extend it

to India, 306; adopt the religion of Mohamed, *ib.*; choose Togrul Bey for their king, who is succeeded by his nephew Alp Arslan, 306; their successes against the Christians of the east under Alp Arslan and his successor Malek Shah, 307; their conquests divided into four kingdoms, 308; their holy war against the Christians, *ib.*; menace Constantinople, 310; their character, *ib.*; endanger Christianity, *ib.*; besiege Vienna in 1683, 312; Christianity delivered from their assaults by the crusades, 313; under the command of Solymán, defeat the first crusaders under Walter the Pennyless, 327; defeated by the crusaders under Godfrey of Bouillon with the loss of Nice, 335; their destructive use of the bow, 336, *note*; defeated again at the battle of Doryldun, 337; lose Antioch, 339; and Jerusalem, with great slaughter, 342; their fortunes begin to revive, 346; take Jerusalem from the crusaders, 349; their prosperity under Zinghis Khan and Timour, 353; [their defeat by gen. Diebitsch in 1829, 354;] deprived of the city of Tyre by the crusaders, 370; besieged in Acre, and lose the city, 374; defeated by Richard the First under Saladin, near Jaffa, 382; defeated a second time by Richard, 390; progress of the Turkish power, *ii.* 41.

Turpin's History of Charlemagne, an early romance, *iv.* 243; probably written by Pope Calixtus the Second, 251.

Tuscany, its republics, *ii.* 39, *note*.

Tyler, Wat, heads an insurrection in Kent, *ii.* 255; marches to London, 256; killed in Smithfield, 259.

Tyre, taken from Saladin by Conrad of Montserrat, *i.* 371.

Tyrrell, Walter, supposed to have shot William Rufus, *i.* 166; escapes to France, *ib.*

— Sir James, one of the murderers of Edward the Fifth and the Duke of York in the Tower, *iii.* 456; his confessions respecting the murder, *iv.* 69; executed for treason, 90.

U & V

Umfreville, Sir Gilbert, his humane and noble conduct towards some French prisoners, *ii.* 366.

Unprovided class of society, *v.* 93.

Upsal, in Sweden, the shocking idolatry practised there, *i.* 32, and *note*.

Urban, Pope, his cause supported in England by Anselm, *i.* 155; acknowledged pope by William Rufus, 157.

— II. pope, recommends the crusades, *i.* 314, *note*, 320.

Utrecht, the see of, founded, *i.* 47, *note*.

Vacarius, Roger, abbot of Bec, teaches the Roman law in England in the twelfth century, *i.* 222, *note*.

Valencia, the Mohamedan king of, seeks the friendship of Henry II. by rich presents, *i.* 299, *note*.

Vandals, the, invade Spain, *i.* 5.

Vaudois. See *Waldenses*.

Vaughan, Sir Thomas, chamberlain to prince Edward at Ludlow, iii. 351; arrested by Gloucester and Buckingham, 383; beheaded, 428.

Venetians, the, obtain settlements at Constantinople, ii. 38.

Venice, its early commercial celebrity, ii. 26; its progress, 45.

Vernucil, the battle of, ii. 491.

Vesey, La dame de, punished for abusing the favor of Edward the Second, ii. 137.

Victor III. pope, endeavors to arrest the progress of the Mohammedans in Africa, i. 319.

Vienna besieged by the Turks in 1683, i. 312.

Vikings, the Scandinavian sea-kings, invade Russia, and settle at Novogorod and Kiow, i. 38, and *note*.

Virgin Mary, devotion to her, v. 45-8.

Vladimir, the Great, introduces Grecian architects into Russia in the eleventh century, ii. 13, *note*; increases the influence of the clergy, *ib.*; introduces Christianity into Russia from Greece, i. 39, *note*.

Voladimir, made a capital of Russia, ii. 15.

W.

Wace, his historical poems, early specimens of Anglo-Norman vernacular poetry, i. 60; iv. 185. 215; translates Jeffry's British History, 222.

Wagri, a branch of the Slavi tribe, i. 34, *note*.

Wakefield, the battle of, iii. 217.

Waldemar, king of Denmark, takes Jomsberg, the city of the Slavi, i. 36.

— II. extends the kingdom of Denmark, but afterwards loses his conquests thro his personal misconduct, ii. 5.

— III. increases the importance of Denmark, ii. 6.

Waldenses, their derivation from the Paulicians, v. 128; their religious opinions, 131; their persecution, 135.

Wales, its conquest by Edward the First, ii. 58; advantages of its union with England, 64.

Wallace, William, rouses the Scotch to arms against Edward the First, ii. 83; his character and origin, 84; kills the sheriff of Lanark, 86; obtains a signal victory over the English troops under the earl of Warenne, 88; assumes the title of governor of Scotland, 89; his troops defeated in a disastrous battle at Falkirk, by Edward I. in person, 92; causes of his failure, 94; refuses to submit to Edward, but is betrayed into his hands, 96; executed in London for high treason, his head exposed on London Bridge, and his limbs sent to Scotland, 97.

Walter Sans-avoir, leads the first body of crusaders, i. 324; killed in an engagement with the Turks, 327.

- Waltheof*, the Anglo-Saxon, unites with the Danes in their invasion of England, i. 101; submits to the government of William, 103; obtains the county of Northampton, 112; joins the conspiracy of the Norman barons against William, 114; betrayed by his wife, and beheaded, 116, and *note*; miracles ascribed to his tomb, *ib. note*.
- Walworth*, mayor of London, kills Wat Tyler in Smithfield, ii. 260.
- Warbeck*, Perkin, his pretensions to the English crown, iv. 67; hanged at Tyburn, 75.
- Warrenne*, earl of, defeats the Scottish army at the battle of Dunbar, ii. 80; appointed governor of Scotland, 81; sent to oppose William Wallace, 87; defeated by Wallace at Stirling, ii. 88.
- Warwick*, Earl of, appointed the tutor of Henry the Sixth, ii. 506; empowered to chastise the king, 507; his unfeeling conduct towards Joan of Arc, 595; supersedes the Duke of York in the command of Normandy, iii. 25; created duke of Warwick, 42; espouses the cause of the duke of York against Somerset, 200; made captain of Calais, 189; gains a splendid naval victory, 197; retreats to Calais after the dispersion of the Yorkists at Ludlow, 204; lands an army in Kent, and marches to London, 206; defeats the king's forces at Northampton, 210; defeated by the queen's forces at St. Albans, 220; takes umbrage at the proceedings of Edward the Fourth after his marriage, 245; marries his daughter to the duke of Clarence, against Edward's wishes, 248; conspires to dethrone him, 249; takes him prisoner, but releases him, 257; is reconciled to Edward, *ib.*; resumes hostilities against him, 259; retreats to France, and joins the party of Queen Margaret, 261; lands in England, and leads a large army against Edward, 269; releases Henry from the Tower, 272; defeated and slain at the battle of Barnet, 296.
- Earl of, son of the duke of Clarence, placed in the Tower by Henry the Seventh, iv. 50; beheaded, 76.
- Wat Tyler*, heads the insurrection against Richard the Second, ii. 255; killed by Walworth, 260.
- Waterloo*, the battle of, its consequences, i. 22.
- Welsh*, their condition and character in the thirteenth century, ii. 58; their subjugation by Edward the First, *ib.*; under Owen Gwynedd, surprise and defeat the English forces under Henry the Second, i. 231.
- Wenlock*, Lord, killed by the duke of Somerset at the battle of Tewkesbury, iii. 335.
- Wentworth*, Sir Thomas, commands a fleet to watch the movements of the earl of Richmond in Bretagne, iii. 489.
- Westminster Abbey*, begun by Henry the Third, i. 440.
- Westmorland*, Earl of, killed at the battle of Towton, iii. 228.
- White companies of France*, their origin and character, ii. 224.

Wicliffe patronised by John of Gaunt, duke of Lancaster, ii. 263; effects of his proceedings, 272; his followers persecuted by Henry the Fourth, 364; appointed by Edward the Third ambassador to the pope, iii. 106; writings against his doctrine, 138; his remarks on the Fryars, v. 167; history of his writings and opinions, 174; his *Triologus*, 181; analysis of, 185; persecuted for his opinions, 194; translates the scriptures into English, 195; supported by the duke of Lancaster, *ib.*; his death, 198; his opinions spread in Bohemia, 200; adopted by John Huss and Jerome of Prague, *ib.*; specimens of his English style, 447.

Wicliffites, their books burnt, ii. 470.

Willebrod, preaches Christianity at Utrecht, i. 47, *note*.

William the Conqueror, his motives for invading England, i. 75; defeats Harold at the battle of Hastings, 77; asserts a legal claim to the English crown, 78; his cautious measures after his victory, 79; his progress facilitated by the dissensions of the English, 80; receives the fealty of the people of Kent, 83; encamps at Wallingford, 84; his negotiations to conciliate the English nobles, *ib.*; invited to ascend the throne, 85; his suspicious temper, 87; his coronation, and the outrage attending it, *ib.*; whether he obtained the throne by conquest or election? *ib. note*; evil consequences of the conduct of his followers at his coronation, 88; his liberalities, 89; conciliates the English people, *ib.*; builds fortifications to overawe his subjects, *ib.*; founds the abbey of Battle on the site of his victory, 90, *note*; returns to Normandy, 91; evils and discontents occasioned by his absence, 92; conspiracies formed against him, 93; returns to London, 94; takes vigorous measures to put down the rebellion of the English chiefs, 95; William of Malmesbury's apology for his excesses in suppressing the rebellion of his English subjects, 97, *note*; desolates Northumbria in revenge of the encouragement given to the Danish invasion, 102; the severe sufferings of his army in their march to the south, 103, and *note*; introduces important changes in the English clergy, 104; applies to the study of the English language, *ib.*; his perfidious conduct towards Edwin and Morcar, 105; employs a witch to endeavour to vanquish Hereward le Wake, 109; receives Hereward into favour, and grants him his patrimonial inheritance, 110; invades Scotland, and obtains the submission of Malcolm, 111; his liberal treatment of Edgar Atheling, *ib.*; his distribution of the English territories amongst his followers, 112; his depression of the natives after his complete subjugation of the country, 113; conspiracy formed against him in England by the Norman barons, 114; the rebellion of his son Robert in Normandy, 117; wounded in a personal rencontre with him, 120; menaced with an attack from St. Canute, king of Denmark, 121; averts the danger by bribery, 122; provoked by a

jest of Philip the First of France to burn the town of Mante, 123; receives a severe and fatal injury during the conflagration, 124; his remorse on his death bed for the cruelties he had committed in England, 125; confers the dukedom of Normandy on his son Robert, *ib.*; despatches his son William to take possession of the English crown, *ib.*; bequeaths his son Henry 5,000 pounds of silver, *ib.*; issues orders for the release of all state prisoners, 126; his death, *ib.*; his body deserted by his attendants, 127; interruption of, and disgusting circumstances attending his funeral, *ib.* and *note*; his person and character, 218; his game laws, *ib.* *note*; his conduct towards the pope and clergy, 130; his feudal donations, 132; encourages the building of castles, 133; in his settlement of England, retains the chief of the ancient laws and customs of the country, 134; humanely provides for the diminution of slavery, *ib.*; his conquest of England not unfavourable to liberty, 137; improvements produced by it, 138; whether he appointed the curfew? 139; his survey of England, as recorded in the Domesday Book, 140.

William, II. wounded in an engagement against the forces of his brother Robert in Normandy, i. 120, *note*; his filial attachment rewarded, 121; sent by his father, while on his death bed, to take possession of the kingdom of England, 125; obtains the crown of England, 141; successfully repels the invasion of Robert his brother, 144; makes peace with him, 145; his character, 146; his romantic voyage to Normandy, *ib.*; curious instances of his chivalrous spirit, 147; his arbitrary measures after the death of Lanfranc, 150; appoints Anselm to the see of Canterbury, 151; his difference with him, 152; his gross impiety, 155, *note*; sequesters Anselm's lands and property, 157; his designs upon Normandy, 158; successes over the Welsh, *ib.*; makes peace with Malcolm, king of Scotland, 159; his temper, *ib.*; his extravagance, *ib.*; attempt to compel a Jew who had embraced Christianity to return to Judaism, 163; his death, 165; doubts of its author, 166.

— son of Robert duke of Normandy, made earl of Flanders, i. 182; endeavours to gain Normandy, 184; his death, 182, *note*.

— son of Henry the Lion, duke of Saxony, and of the daughter of Henry the Second of England, the founder of the house of Brunswick, ii. 10, *note*.

— de Pratelles saves Richard the First from being taken by the Turks, i. 385, *note*.

— count of Poitou and duke of Aquitaine, the earliest troubadour, and ancestor of Eleanor, queen of Henry I. i. 217, *note*.

— de Conchis, studies natural philosophy from the Arabians, iv. 382.

— of Warenne, appointed governor of Norwich castle, i. 115, *note*.

- William* of Wickham, receives the great seal from Richard the Second, ii. 304.
- Willoughby*, Sir Robert, attainted by Richard the Third, iii. 493, *note*.
- Wiltshire*, Earl of, beheaded after the battle of Towton, iii. 230.
- Winchester*, bishop of, endeavours to take the government of Henry VI. from the duke of Gloucester, ii. 497; his reconciliation to him, 502; is deprived of the chancellorship, 503; meditates a crusade against the Bohemians, 504; made a cardinal, *ib.*; attends the execution of Joan of Arc, 598; his political contests with the duke of Gloucester, iii. 1.; charges made against him, 33; his death and character, 54, and *note*.
- Winedi*, the, a nation of the Slavi, invade Germany, i. 4, *note*.
- Witch*, a, employed by William the Conqueror to endeavour to vanquish Hereward, i. 109.
- Wittichind*, the Saxon war-king, who fought against Charlemagne, i. 10, *note*.
- Wollin* on the Oder, the site of the Jomsberg of the Slavi, i. 36.
- Women*, supposed in Russia to cause famine by magic, i. 100, *note*.
- Woodville*, Sir Richard, attainted by Richard the Third, iii. 493, *note*.
- Worcester*, earl of, conspires with the Percys against Henry the Fourth, ii. 357; taken captive at the battle of Shrewsbury, 360.
- Wyddford*, William, writes against Wicliffe, v. 197.
- Wymbilton*, Thomas, specimen of his English style, v. 451.

Y

- York*, Duke of, killed at the battle of Agincourt, ii. 456.
- Duke of, assumes the command of the English forces in Normandy, iii. 25; defends his conduct there, 62; regarded as the rightful heir to the throne, 29; his pretensions to the crown stated, 158; quits Ireland, and advances to London, on Somerset's surrender of Caen, 164; his complaint against the duke of Somerset, 166; impeaches him, 169; assembles an army, 170; sent prisoner to London, but dismissed, 172; obtains the government on the king's illness, 177; named protector, 180; made governor of Calais, 181; his protectorate ceases on the king's recovery, 183; leads an armed force to London, to obtain the expulsion of Somerset, 184; defeats the royal army at the first battle of St. Albans, 187; conducts the king to London, and is appointed constable of England, 189; made protector, 191; discharged from his office by the influence of the queen, 192; narrowly escapes being destroyed by her, 193; temporary reconciliation between him and his opponents, 194; resolves upon open hostilities against the queen's party, 199; his forces being dispersed at Ludlow, he retreats to Ireland, 202; arrives

- in London, after the battle of Northampton, 212; claims the crown, 213; his succession enacted, 215; defeated and beheaded at the battle of Wakefield, 218.
- York*, Duke of, brother of Edward the Fifth, taken from his mother, and placed in the Tower, by the duke of Gloucester, iii. 420.
- archbishop of, made a cardinal, iii. 27.
- Ywaine* and *Gawaine*, the romance of, v. 241.

Z.

- Zeerneboch*, or the black deity, an idol of the Slavonians, ii. 9, *note*.
- Zenghi*, the Turkish chieftain. See *Sanguin*.
- Zengis Khan*, his invasions alarm Europe, i. 446.
- Zuantewith*, a Slavonic idol worshipped at Rugen, ii. 9, *note*.

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